United Nations A/S-20/PV.8

General Assembly
Twentieth Special Session

Official Records

8th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 10 June 1998, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Udovenko . . . . . (Ukraine)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 3 (*continued*)

Credentials of representatives to the twentieth special session of the General Assembly

(b) Report of the Credentials Committee (A/S-20/10)

The President: We shall first proceed to consider the draft resolution recommended by the Credentials Committee in paragraph 14 of its report.

The Assembly will now take action on the recommendation of the Credentials Committee set forth in paragraph 14 of its report.

The Credentials Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution S-20/1).

The President: We have thus concluded our consideration of agenda item 3.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

General debate

The President: The first speaker on my list is His Excellency Mr. Ivica Kostović, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Science and Technology of Croatia, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Kostović (Croatia): This important special session gives all of us a historic opportunity to agree on a comprehensive strategy to fight the drug problem and to truly commit ourselves to carrying out this strategy in a highly responsible and effective manner.

The drug problem is a major global security issue which requires a joint global effort in order to stand a chance of success. It hurts big States and small ones, developed and undeveloped, as well as those in transition. Addressing it at the local level must be complemented by effective regional and global action. Specific national programmes, including ours, will resemble Sisyphus rolling his stone up a hill if we do not support the eradication of narcotic drugs wherever they are grown or find mechanisms to control and stop the illicit production of synthetic drugs in many countries.

We cannot overstate the importance of the global United Nations approach in fighting the drug problem. The global effort takes into account all the diversities and specificities of particular countries and allows them to build their own strategies, but within the framework of the global concept of cooperation and with transparent and clear objectives.

I should now like to present briefly the recent Croatian experience in addressing the drug problem. The war of aggression recently waged against us has seriously

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aggravated the drug abuse problem in Croatia. Given these circumstances, the reaction of the Government has been rather quick. The problem was recognized and a national strategy on the prevention of drug abuse was proposed by a governmental committee and accepted by Parliament in January 1996. Beginning the implementation of the national strategy has brought up many difficult questions, underlining the complexity of prevailing drug problems.

We would like to express our particular appreciation to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) for its assistance, which has resulted in a joint project with Croatia on drug-abuse control. The two-year project includes activities to modernize drug control and related legislation, strengthening drug-law enforcement and improving demand reduction structures.

Croatia considers the UNDCP strategic approach to regional and subregional cooperation programmes to be important and very helpful. As a country at the crossroads of illicit drug-trafficking routes, Croatia is interested in being an active member of UNDCP subregional drug-control programmes for Central Europe as well as for South-Eastern Europe. Our priorities are both to strongly control the so-called Balkan route and to participate in coordinated activities with the Central European countries.

Croatia also cooperates well with fellow States members of the Central European Initiative, of which my country holds the presidency this year. Its expert working group on organized crime has decided to meet in October this year at the level of ministers of the interior, because the fight against transnational organized crime is one of the major issues of common interest to the members of the Initiative. At that meeting, the fight against illicit drug-trafficking will be at the top of the agenda. All these regional and subregional efforts could be important steps in implementing global strategic goals and in facilitating the realization of the vision of a drug-free world.

I would also like to mention that in May this year Croatia hosted the twenty-seventh European regional conference of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL). At that session, INTERPOL declared the fight against drugs to be its strategic priority in the context of other forms of organized crime, such as money-laundering, the illicit trade in weapons and terrorism.

As concerns the current situation in Croatia, our assessment is that the expansion of the drug-abuse epidemic as a post-war syndrome has been halted. However, the increasing trend still continues, owing to reasons unrelated to the war but related instead to the same factors that have made drug abuse a global problem.

The new crime law, the law against money-laundering and the law on drug control, which is in the process of being adopted, will modernize Croatia's legislation and provide our society with the legal provisions necessary to fight the illicit supply of drugs and to mitigate its consequences.

However, the experience of many countries that have been facing serious drug problems for a much longer time warns that measures to control illicit trafficking alone are not enough. That is the reason why the new strategy to fight drugs gives a special role to demand reduction. My Government strongly supports that concept and urges the strengthening of cooperation in the field of prevention.

Undoubtedly, the twentieth special session of the General Assembly reflects the international community's awareness that the consequences of drug abuse are devastating and destructive for the human spirit, for families, for communities and for countries. We believe that young people first and foremost, as the most affected part of the population, and who are the future of the world, demand that we all act very quickly. The new strategy gives us hope, but also requires that we devote ourselves truly and strongly to implementing the concept and vision of a drug-free world. My Government expresses its readiness to do its part to the fullest.

The President: I thank the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Science and Technology of Croatia for his statement.

I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Janusz Tomaszewski, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Internal Affairs and Administration of Poland.

Mr. Tomaszewski (Poland) (*spoke in Polish; English text furnished by the delegation*): At the outset, I wish to note that the Polish delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by His Excellency The Honourable John Prescott, Deputy Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, on behalf of the European Union.

When the United Nations adopted the United Nations Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances 10 years ago, one

could have surmised that it dealt with a problem that would affect my country soon and to a considerable extent. Today, drug addiction is a dangerous social problem in Poland. The danger concerns all social groups and circles, regardless of their locality, age, level of education or material status. Drug-related crime is growing drastically.

According to estimates, some 40,000 people habitually consume drugs in Poland today, and this number is rising. The drugs most frequently consumed are marijuana and hashish brought in from Western Europe, as well as amphetamines and other synthetic drugs, which are also produced in Poland. A Polish marijuana, made from Polish plantings of Indian hemp, has also recently appeared on the market.

Unfortunately, the chief consumers of drugs are people aged 15 to 25. We note a steady decrease in the age of people who consume drugs. One specific phenomenon is the group of drug addicts who consume so-called Polish heroine, whose number is growing. A large majority of them produce and consume the drugs themselves, and also sell them to others in order to earn a living and finance their habit.

Our information indicates that organized criminal groups are today taking control of local drug markets. They are gradually seeking to monopolize and totally dominate these markets by extorting money or, more directly, by organizing drug deliveries. The distribution of drugs is handled by groups with broad contacts at home and abroad and with considerable funds and adequate technology at their disposal.

The illegal production of synthetic drugs in Poland, out of raw materials supplied from abroad, is becoming an increasingly serious problem. Criminal laboratories operating on Polish territory, with professional equipment and qualified personnel, are producing amphetamines both for the domestic market and for transfer abroad. The destruction of 10 such illegal production facilities in 1997 was an undeniable victory for the Polish police. The criminal groups engaged in the illegal manufacture of amphetamines are very adaptable in their activities. Apart from the drug business, they are also engaged in other areas of crime: car theft and trading in stolen cars, robbery, forging money and documents, and smuggling alcohol, cigarettes and weapons.

Poland is a country whose borders are open to an influx of people and goods. The fact that Poland is exploited as a transit country for the shipment of drugs is connected with its central location in Europe: many land, maritime and air routes converge there. The Balkan trail, by which heroine is shipped from the so-called Golden Triangle and Golden Crescent regions, leads through Poland. Cocaine from South America and cannabis from southern Asia and South America are also shipped via this route.

Increasingly, we observe closer links between Polish criminal groups and criminal groups in other countries, especially in the production of synthetic drugs and in the transfer and smuggling of drugs. Polish citizens are used by international criminal organizations, as well as by Polish organizations, as drug runners on the most important smuggling routes.

Between 1994 and 1997, the number of the most serious drug-related offences, such as the production, distribution and smuggling of drugs, rose by almost 100 per cent, from 4,000 to 7,915. The Polish Government has undertaken a series of actions to change this situation. A new law on combatting drug addiction came into force a few months ago. One of the main goals of adopting it was to adapt Polish legislation to international standards and, in particular, to criminalize the possession of drugs. The new law has also introduced the duty to control trade in chemical substances used in the production of narcotics and other intoxicants. The new regulations prohibit the production, acquisition, possession or storage of precursors by unauthorized elements.

In order to improve the work of the police in combatting drug-related crime, a special narcotics bureau was set up in February 1997. Its work is already yielding tangible results. Polish law allows the police to send mail that is secretly monitored; this is particularly useful in combatting drug smuggling. Laws are being prepared which will enable us to combat money-laundering. We are convinced that these are an essential part of the effective struggle against criminals who derive profit from drugs.

Poland's experience over the past few years indicates that without international cooperation it is impossible to create an effective system of internal security or halt the threat of organized crime.

The 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, a document that served as a kind of model, provided the inspiration for the Polish idea of a convention against transnational organized crime. We are convinced that the

work on this convention, sometimes called the Warsaw convention, will be successfully concluded and will serve to support to a considerable extent actions aimed at illegal drug-trafficking.

At the same time, mindful of the constant changes in the situation and in the nature of the phenomenon against which the United Nations conventions concerning drug addiction and drug-trafficking are aimed, it seems advisable to consider the possibility of reviewing some of the provisions of these conventions so that they may suit the requirements of today.

Poland wishes to participate actively in the efforts of the United Nations in the battle against drugs. We welcome with satisfaction the idea of establishing in Vienna a centre for combating organized and drug-related crime. The achievements to date of the Vienna offices for drug control and crime prevention augur well for this idea. Poland could be the site of a regional bureau for combating the drug threat.

Despite the fact that the anti-drug units of the Polish police have only recently become operational, Poland's police forces are cooperating effectively in this sphere with their counterparts in other countries. We have concluded with a number of countries bilateral agreements concerning, among other things, the combating of drug-related crime. Nearly two weeks ago an agreement between the European Union and the associated countries on the subject of security vis-à-vis organized crime, including drug-related crime, was reached in Brussels. Poland, was a signatory country and also took active part in the preparation of the agreement.

The diversity of the situation in various countries requires the use of diverse resources. To combat drug addiction and drug-related crime effectively, efficient police forces are not enough. It is essential to have programmes of social and economic action to curb the demand for drugs, reduce deliveries and create possibilities of alternative development in those areas where drug production has become part of the economy of individual regions.

We should be concerned by the fact that modern communications resources, such as the Internet, are increasingly being used to promote the consumption and manufacture of drugs. I think that in this sphere, too, it is essential for us to cooperate in order to reduce these negative phenomena.

The Polish Government will not give up in its efforts to combat drug addiction and drug-related crime. The Declaration that is the focus of the present special session is a major incentive to combine our activities on an international scale. For this action to be effective, it has to be coordinated by the appropriate organs and agencies of the United Nations. Along with the Declaration, programmes of long-term activities are emerging. I wish to assure the Assembly that Poland will actively participate in the efforts to fulfil these programmes' important objectives.

The President: I thank the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Internal Affairs and Administration of Poland for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Valeriy A. Smoliy, the Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine.

Mr. Smoliy (Ukraine) (*spoke in Ukrainian; English text furnished by the delegation*): Among the many global challenges facing mankind at the end of this millennium, the drug problem remains one of the most serious.

The convening of this special session of the General Assembly at such a high political level is an indication of a deep understanding by all countries of the world of the fact that today international drug crime has already become a strong destabilizing force capable of ruining not only the political and economic foundations of States, but also peace and security on earth.

Drug dealers are well equipped with modern technologies and means of transportation. Their profits exceed by many times the amount of money allotted by the world community for development purposes. It is a fact that no nation can stand against these forces by itself. If previously cooperation in the struggle against drug crime was viewed as a manifestation of solidarity by countries, today the coordination of national efforts has become a vitally necessary prerequisite for the secure and stable development of nations.

This forum is taking place in conditions of considerable geopolitical changes that have occurred since the adoption, at the seventeenth special session of the General Assembly, of the Political Declaration and the Global Programme of Action. The elimination of remnants of totalitarianism and the transition of new and restored democracies from planned to market economies have, unfortunately, turned out to be a more difficult process than initially expected. One of the negative

phenomena that has increased during this process is the growth of criminal activity connected with illegal drug-trafficking.

Ukraine faces a number of problems in countering this criminal activity. During the previous period, the number of drug addicts, according to official data, has increased threefold, to about 70,000 individuals. But can we estimate the real number of victims of this terrible phenomenon? According to some estimates, this figure might exceed half a million. Each year our law-enforcement bodies confiscate more than 40 tons of narcotics from illegal drug traffickers.

The situation becomes more complicated since Ukraine, due to its geopolitical situation, is of great interest to drugs dealers. New routes of the international drug business have gone through the territory of our country to the States of Europe with which we have common borders. During only the last half year, 874 kilograms of cocaine, more than six tons of hashish and other narcotic substances on their way to the countries of Western Europe have been seized in Ukraine.

This situation has led to the need to establish an effective State mechanism to counteract drug crimes and drug addiction. The President and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine have made control over trafficking in drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors a national-policy priority. Within the framework of these measures, the concept of monitoring the trafficking in drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors was adopted, the National Coordinating Council on Combating Drug Abuse was established and the National Programme to Counter Illegal Drug-trafficking and Abuse was approved.

Our country attaches great importance to international cooperation in combating drug-trafficking. One of the main focuses of such cooperation was the conclusion of 57 bilateral and multilateral agreements on legal assistance, including issues regarding combating illicit drug-trafficking. Today, Ukraine is a party to the three basic United Nations conventions on monitoring trafficking in drugs and psychotropic substances. It takes an active part in the work of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol). It enjoys fruitful cooperation with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund and other international organizations. Ukraine's activity in the field of combating drug-trafficking within the framework of regional organizations, specifically the Council of Europe and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, is becoming more and more dynamic.

I would like also to take this opportunity to underline the effectiveness of a new regional initiative, the international operational preventive operation "Kanal" that has been developed jointly by Ukraine, the Russian Federation, Belarus and Moldova. The distinguishing feature of this operation, which envisages interaction between competent institutions on the borders of those countries, is the high level of dynamism, the mobilization of the efforts and means of the law-enforcement bodies of the participating countries. Taking into account that the criminal groupings of the drug business are transferring the centre of their activities to Central and Eastern Europe, we invite other countries of the region to take part in the implementation of the this initiative.

At this session, the General Assembly will, for the first time, adopt a number of important documents drafted through the joint efforts of Member States and the active role of the various bodies of the United Nations system. These documents contain a new world strategy for combating illicit drug-trafficking and lay secure grounds for the further strengthening of international cooperation in this field. Ukraine's delegation expresses the hope that all States of the world will demonstrate sufficient political will for the practical realization of these provisions.

The achievement of our common aspiration to put an end to the problem of drugs and to enter the third millennium with the hope of freeing human civilization from this horrible phenomenon depends precisely on the unity of all members of the world community.

The President: I thank the Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine for his statement. I also urge other delegations to follow the Ukrainian example and to take even less time than expected. His statement was less than seven minutes long.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. H.A.F.M.O. van Mierlo, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

Mr. Van Mierlo (Netherlands): This General Assembly's special session on drugs provides us with a unique opportunity to examine successes and shortcomings in tackling the world drug problem. In the 10 years that have passed since the adoption of the United Nations Convention against the Illicit Traffic in

Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988, much has been accomplished; but we still have a long way to go.

The international drug control treaties have been created with the explicit purpose of protecting life and health. What these treaties have failed to do is to provide a proper framework for the vital element of demand reduction. We are therefore deeply satisfied that the General Assembly at this special session will put demand reduction high on the international drug control agenda by adopting a Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Demand Reduction. These principles are a welcome and necessary addition to the treaties. The Declaration recognizes the very broad range of issues that are covered by the term "demand reduction", stretching from the prevention of first-time use all the way to reducing the negative consequences of drug abuse.

The Declaration is an important step in the right direction; but we should not stop there. The next step should be to evaluate the results of our past efforts in order to find out what works and what does not. In discussing new strategies, let us not get trapped in the ideological disputes of the past. Let us instead base our discussions on facts and on the practical experiences we have gained over the years.

We strongly believe that the only way to tackle the drug problem effectively is by means of an integrated and balanced approach that includes both demand reduction and supply reduction; for production and consumption are two sides of the same coin.

In combating drug cultivation and production, we have several instruments at our disposal. These include alternative development and law enforcement measures, which should be applied on a case-by-case basis. We therefore welcome the Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and on Alternative Development. In this Plan, the basic principles for effective alternative development programmes are established. We urge all countries and organizations to apply these principles to the best of their ability.

Drug-trafficking, by its nature, does not respect national boundaries. It calls for concerted action at all levels. As far as action within and by the European Union is concerned, I would like to refer to the speech of the European Union presidency. A region of particular interest to us is the Caribbean, a major transit area in which parts of the Kingdom of the Netherlands — namely, the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba — are situated. We will continue to support the implementation of the Barbados Plan of Action. This presents an excellent framework for coordinated regional action and is as yet the only one of its kind. In addition, the Kingdom of the Netherlands has recently taken the initiative to explore the possibilities for a formal agreement between the countries of the region to strengthen maritime cooperation.

Related to both drug production and trafficking is the fast-growing problem of money-laundering. This special session will approve a resolution setting out the basic principles for efforts to counter it. As a next step, we should agree on a global set of measures to implement them. The Kingdom of the Netherlands, which plays an active role in the Financial Action Task Force and in its Caribbean branch, the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force, will be happy to contribute to the establishment of such measures.

Allow me to share some of the experiences of the Netherlands' demand reduction policy. Our primary aim is to protect health and social well-being and to reduce the harm and risks associated with drug abuse. Within this context, we believe that drug users should not be criminalized for their habits, but, on the contrary, should be provided the help they need. This policy has shown some positive results.

First, our policy prevents drug users from going underground, where we cannot reach them. We have identified the various user groups and we know their habits. This has enabled us to develop targeted policy measures, which are more effective. By being brought out into the open, drug use has become less glamorous. The clearest example of this is the use of opiates. For young people in the Netherlands now, heroin is for losers; very few of them would think of trying it.

Secondly, thanks to a high standard of treatment, care and risk reduction, including methadone and needle exchange programmes, morbidity and mortality rates among drug users are relatively low. Such measures are also important to society in general, since they reduce the spread of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, AIDS and hepatitis.

Now, one may ask whether our programmes do not lead to an increase in drug abuse. Our experience is that they do not. On the contrary, needle-exchange programmes, for instance, have not led to more

intravenous drug use, but they have led to fewer people sharing needles. Consequently, few addicts in the Netherlands suffer from AIDS.

Each country must bear in mind that it should not impose its system on other countries as the only right and proper one. This would deny the specific circumstances of the drug problem, which vary from country to country. In regional and international discussions we must find out what is the best approach for our peoples, based on arguments and experiences. We in the Netherlands believe that we are on the right track, encouraged as we are by results and figures. We have a wealth of experience in demand-reduction programmes and are willing to contribute to the further development of the guiding principles on demand reduction and their implementation.

Whether the world will ever be completely free of drugs remains an open question. Control of drugs and drug-related problems seems a more attainable goal. As we all know, even to reach this objective takes all the resources, both political and financial, that we can bring to bear. The Kingdom of the Netherlands stands ready to play its part, and we look forward to working together with all other Members.

The President: I thank the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands for his statement.

I give the floor to The Honourable Michael Nali, MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Trade and Industry of Papua New Guinea.

Mr. Nali (Papua New Guinea): On behalf of the Government and the people of Papua New Guinea, I want to extend my appreciation to you, Sir, as President of this twentieth special session of the General Assembly, for this opportunity to add Papua New Guinea's voice on the issue of narcotics and drug abuse.

This event is truly historic. Not only are we commemorating the tenth anniversary of the drafting of the 1988 Convention, in which Papua New Guinea actively participated, but for the first time all the Member States have gathered in this Hall to consolidate our efforts in a political declaration to counter drug abuse.

The twentieth century has seen the international community grapple with this serious problem. Now, at the conclusion of this century and on the eve of a new millennium, we are committing ourselves to the one element that has often been lacking: the political will needed for us to unite and solve the problem of this scourge of modern humankind.

Globally, we are all conscious of the magnitude of drug abuse, which has spread to every corner of the world. Terrorist groups and organized criminals have seized upon human weaknesses to carry out their activities, to the detriment of the vast majority of the human race.

Papua New Guinea welcomes its responsibilities in the context of these challenges and hence reaffirms the importance of the political declaration and the declaration on the guiding principles of demand reduction as valuable tools in our Government's attempt to counter drug abuse.

Mr. Campbell (Ireland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Papua New Guinea's geographical position gives the perception that the illicit drug trade could not possibly be found among its 4 million people, but in fact drugs, both foreign and domestic, are taking their toll on the country at an alarming rate. As the largest island nation-State in the South Pacific, we have great potential in terms not only of natural resources but also, more importantly, in the richest of all resources: people, and especially our youth. This is precisely where illegal drugs are making their greatest impact. We not only have illegal drug users in our country, but also increasing numbers of illegal exporters and importers of drugs, especially of marijuana and cannabis. We see havoc and destruction in the lives of so many, especially our young people.

We are keenly aware of the impact of drugs on the economic life of our country. Our battle against drugs means that monies that are vitally needed for the development of our country are being spent on fighting this problem. But we are determined to counter these losses and to eliminate drug abuse from our society.

Our Government has already established a special Narcotics Bureau to address and coordinate all aspects of the fight against drug abuse. My Government is introducing in Parliament new, up-to-date legislation, drafted with the assistance of the United Nations experts, to place these substances under both national and international control. Papua New Guinea is a signatory to the Convention of 1961, and its consequent amendment in the 1971 Convention. Upon passage of the new

Controlled Substance bill, we expect to join those nations in ratifying the 1988 Convention.

My delegation welcomes the fact that this special session will consider as a priority our concerns related to money- laundering, which is a threat to the South Pacific region. Our new legislation contains provisions to address this aspect, as well as measures to promote judicial cooperation.

Many traditional methods of reducing the supply of drugs have to a certain extent failed in many countries, as they have in ours. This does not mean that supply reduction needs to be abandoned. On the contrary, the proposed bill will strengthen law-enforcement bodies in this work by introducing such measures as controlled delivery. But we are grateful that the promotion of alternative development projects is being discussed and recognized as a method of supply reduction.

The drug menace is spreading rapidly not only because of human weaknesses but also because it is promoted by terrorists and organized crime. That being the case, Papua New Guinea recognizes that we are dealing with forces so powerful that no one country alone can hope to contain the problem by itself.

Therefore, we need greater international assistance. We strongly support the call for financial institutions to commit themselves to an active partnership with Member States, and in particular to those countries under severe financial constraints, thus enabling us to have the necessary resources to combat drug abuse. It makes good sense for those who wish to invest in developing countries to help those Governments curtail the greatest obstacle to economic investment: illicit narcotic drugs and their abuse.

Papua New Guinea is committed to a leadership role in the Oceania region. We have embarked upon a massive awareness programme in our country that is aimed in particular at preventing young people from being lured into the problems related to drug abuse.

We have established a vibrant training centre and developed courses on basic training in drug abuse, a counselling, treatment, rehabilitation and community-based drug awareness. This programme will be extended as a way of strengthening regional cooperation.

The target dates and strategies set at this special session are not easily attainable. But at the same time, Papua New Guinea pledges its complete commitment to working together with the international community. Let me assure the Assembly that my Government will translate the words of the Political Declaration into action for today and tomorrow.

The President: I thank the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Trade and Industry of Papua New Guinea for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Peter Boyadjiev, Minister of Health of Bulgaria.

Mr. Boyadjiev (Bulgaria) (*interpretation from French*): The Government of the Republic of Bulgaria supports and welcomes the drafting of the documents which this productive twentieth special session of the General Assembly will adopt today, covering a broad range of problems in the struggle being waged by the entire international community against drug abuse. We are convinced that the essential goals of the war against this threat and challenge to humanity will be met, because countries respect decisions and rules which they establish for themselves.

Bulgaria's national strategy in this field is one with the policy of the world community. It is based on the implementation of a systematic approach to this complex and complicated phenomenon and attacks the problem domestically at every link in the chain, from production and trafficking to use and money-laundering. Bulgaria's specific conditions require us to take repressive measures against the dominant threat: the illicit international traffic in drugs and the diversion of part of this traffic to the domestic market.

This priority reflects the country's geopolitical position on an important transit route and our determination to be as effective as possible in the anti-drug campaign. It is no coincidence that, year after year, Bulgarians customs have seized substantial quantities of drugs and precursors. The energetic action and vigilance of law enforcement officials in recent months have led to the elimination of small laboratories and an illegal amphetamine factory in Bulgaria at the initial stages of their criminal activities.

Efforts are being made at the national level to reduce demand through a widespread public relations campaign and an unyielding attitude towards drugs and the illegal activities associated with them. At the same time, a network of professional medical treatment and addict rehabilitation has been established in the country.

For humanitarian reasons, we are trying to expand programmes that allow us to confine the risks, reduce the damage and control access to drugs when their use cannot be prevented.

In the anti-drug struggle, this year has been particularly fruitful for the world Organization and for Bulgaria.

A national law on narcotics, encompassing several aspects, has been drafted in conformity with international norms and standards. This law will be adopted in its definitive form when this forum issues its latest decisions. A new law has been drafted in the struggle against money-laundering and the institutional potential for its complex implementation have been expanded. Preparations have begun for the establishment of up-to-date anti-corruption legislation.

The new national strategy in the fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking is categorically designed to strengthen national institutions and their material bases and to promote wide and regulated international cooperation in this field. Bulgaria is participating as actively as possible in the creation of subregional cooperation machinery in the struggle against drug transit along the Balkan route.

We are aware that the objectives of the Bulgarian national strategy can be achieved only if there is broad action and effective cooperation and collaboration between the State, the private sector, civil organizations, communities, universities, schools, families and individuals. That is why 17 institutions are represented before the Council of Ministers on the National Council against drug abuse and illicit drug-trafficking.

The time that has elapsed since the seventeenth special session on drugs has convinced the international community that it can win the fight and prevent drug-related problems from deteriorating. Organized crime knows no State borders or moral standards. Let us show that we can be equally organized, decisive and determined in our fight against it.

We dare to hope that this session of the General Assembly will mark the turning point at which the international community abandons its strategy of fighting to win isolated battles for one of fighting to win the entire war.

The President: I thank the Minister of Health of Bulgaria for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Wong Kan Seng, Minister for Home Affairs of the Republic of Singapore.

Mr. Wong (Singapore): As we stand on the threshold of a new millennium, we face an old adversary. More than 30 years ago, the United Nations called attention to the drug menace and its frightening consequences if left unchecked. In three decades, three separate Conventions have been adopted. However, with the advent of cashless transactions and modern communications, the illegal use of and traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances have increased manifold. The drug menace remains one of the most pressing global concerns of our time.

No country, whether developed or developing, has escaped this scourge. The fight against the global drug problem is a common and shared responsibility which requires the commitment of all States. Our task will not be easy. However, it is a battle we can ill afford to lose. At this special session of the General Assembly, we must commit ourselves to the international efforts to combat the world drug problem. We must have the collective political will to take tough measures and rid ourselves of this menace.

Through the United Nations system, we should develop action-oriented international strategies to control chemical precursors used for the illicit manufacture of drugs. Measures must be taken to eliminate or significantly reduce illicit crops and to promote alternative development programmes. However, eradicating the supply of drugs is not enough to tackle the world drug problem. We must reduce the demand for drugs. This can be done only through the implementation of measures which emphasize deterrence and rehabilitation and through preventive education programmes.

Governments alone cannot effectively tackle the drug problem. The role of the community is an integral part of the war against drugs. The drug problem directly impacts on families and communities. It undermines the political, social, economic and cultural foundations of every society. Therefore, the devastating effects of and social problems arising from drug abuse must not be neglected. Here, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) can play a strong advisory role. The UNDCP has the capacity to adapt to local circumstances and has a wide variety of methodologies

and best practices developed under pilot projects throughout the world.

The United Nations has also established a Commission on Narcotics Drugs and an International Narcotics Control Board. It is time to strengthen their roles by improving cooperation among our judicial and law enforcement agencies. Through closer contacts, we can facilitate the exchange of information leading to the identification, freezing, seizure and confiscation of the proceeds of crime. The UNDCP can also play a role in encouraging greater subregional and regional cooperation. Criminal organizations take full advantage of borders demarcating different legal and judicial systems and socio-economic realities. Through greater international and regional cooperation, we can prevent these groups from exploiting our legal and judicial systems. In this regard, Singapore supports the joint declaration of the signatory countries of the 1993 memorandum of understanding on drug control.

Money-laundering is another consequence of the drug problem. The development of sophisticated communications and financial infrastructures worldwide has provided drug traffickers with effective avenues for legitimizing their earnings from the drug trade. As a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), Singapore has worked with other countries to combat international money-laundering. We have also put in place legislation to counter this problem and provided for judicial cooperation on drug matters. We are committed to working closely with other Member States and the FATF to prevent drug traffickers from profiting from their illegal activities.

Singapore is strongly committed to the fight against drugs. We take the drug problem seriously because our geographical location puts us at constant risk of being used as a trans-shipment point for drug-trafficking. We have successfully contained the drug problem through strict anti-drug legislation and effective enforcement against drug abuse. Our stringent deterrent laws are well known. Drug offenders are treated with the same gravity whether they are Singaporean or foreign nationals. At the same time, we have undertaken rigorous enforcement efforts to maintain checks and curbs on the supply of drugs into Singapore. We have extended our assistance and cooperation to other drug enforcement agencies and will continue to do so as part of our contribution to the international drug control effort.

Singapore has also developed an effective preventive drug education programme. In this respect, the strong partnership between the Singapore Government, our community and non-governmental organizations and self-help groups have helped to create a national consensus towards zero-tolerance for drug abuse. By learning from one another, the various organizations have developed more structured preventive programmes and organized more drug-prevention activities. Though the results are long-drawn, there have already been encouraging results to these efforts.

For example, despite vigorous enforcement, our police and drug enforcement agencies are making fewer arrests. In 1994, about 6,160 individuals were arrested. In 1997, we saw a 22 per cent drop, to 4,750 individuals. Fewer relapses are also being reported: 66 per cent in 1997, compared to 81 per cent in 1994. Fewer new addicts were arrested in 1997: 1,130, compared to 1,420 in 1996. The drug situation in Singapore is very much under control.

The world community's success in combating the drug problem depends on our sustained collective commitment. Individual Governments must stay the course if international action is to achieve positive and lasting results. The drug control situation continues to change relentlessly. There will always be new challenges to this problem, be it in the changing patterns of manufacture, trafficking or abuse of drugs.

The United Nations and its agencies therefore have a pivotal role to play in global efforts to combat the drug problem. The international treaty system and the international standards and norms embodied in the resolutions of the General Assembly and the work of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs provide an irreplaceable foundation and point of reference in the efforts to overcome the world drug problem.

We have a unique opportunity here in New York to take stock of our individual and collective efforts to combat the world drug problem. Let us not waste it on mere rhetoric. Let us instead make a firm commitment as to what we, the international community, can and will do to resolve this shared problem.

The Acting President: I thank the Minister for Home Affairs of Singapore for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Nicolae Tabacaru, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova.

Mr. Tabacaru (Republic of Moldova): There is no doubt that the production, sale and consumption of drugs have a disastrous impact on both society as a whole and on individuals. It is equally clear that they have become a serious problem for most of the countries of the world. This transnational dimension of the problem has led to the acknowledgement that the fight against drugs can be efficacious only through the close cooperation of all States.

For many years, the United Nations has played the role of the main coordinator of international efforts to fight this dangerous phenomenon on the global level and though we are far from the complete elimination of the drug issue from the United Nations agenda, we should admit that the United Nations has contributed significantly to the achievement of certain successes in some countries and regions.

At the same time, we believe that the suggestions that will be made and the decisions that will be adopted by the member States at this special session of the General Assembly will contribute decisively to the realization of the objectives of the United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse.

The Republic of Moldova fully supports the draft Political Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction, which we regard as one of the most important initiatives in the fight against narcotic drug abuse.

In this context, I would like to express our gratitude to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and the Centre for International Drug Control for their efforts in the preparatory activities of this special session. The Republic of Moldova highly appreciates the activities of these bodies, which have generated and promoted the implementation of a number of decisions with respect to the fight against the production, traffic and illegal sale of drugs.

Like other newly independent countries confronted with the drug problem, we are extremely interested in developing additional cooperation with the UNDCP. The lack of proper specialized institutional structures, as well as insufficient financial resources, create serious difficulties for the newly independent States in implementing programmes in the fields of education, treatment and rehabilitation. This situation requires the launching of a number of assistance projects in the areas concerned by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, in cooperation with the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children Fund, the United Nations Development Programme and other United Nations bodies. We therefore hope that the relevant international structures will consider the specific problems of this group of countries when planning their future activities in this region.

Although the drug problems of my country are not as great as those of other countries of our region, they are basically generated by Moldova's geographical position on the "Balkan route", the illicit thoroughfare of narcotic-drug transit.

It is well known that this negative phenomenon flourishes because of certain conditions, among them the conflict zones generated by separatist movements. Unfortunately, the Republic of Moldova is no exception in this respect. I would like to refer here to the eastern region of my country, which is beyond the control of the constitutional authorities of the Republic of Moldova, and which creates favourable conditions for carrying out illegal activities. These activities not only jeopardize the sovereignty and integrity of the country, but also create conditions for drug- and armament-trafficking and money-laundering.

The destabilization potential of this particular situation, which imperils regional security, also generates problems for other countries. That is why we consider that only joint actions by the countries of the region, in cooperation with the relevant structures of the United Nations, can prevent the transformation of this region into a centre of drug- and armament-trafficking. Consequently, we believe that the legal settlement of the situation in the eastern part of the country will have a positive effect on the existing situation in the region.

My country is making considerable efforts to fight against the production, trafficking and sale of narcotic drugs. In the last few years we have adopted a series of laws to control narcotic drugs. My country's adherence to the United Nations conventions on this problem has given an impetus to improving the legal framework in this field.

In addition to measures taken at the national level, the Republic of Moldova has developed a bilateral cooperation framework. We have signed a number of intergovernmental agreements with the countries of our region. On the basis of the decisions adopted at this session, the Republic of Moldova will act with firmness

in order to fight against the drug phenomenon in all its manifestations.

In conclusion, I would like to express our hope that close cooperation between nations will constitute an important step in the consolidation of the fight against the illicit production, traffic and sale of narcotic drugs.

The Acting President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Luc Frieden, Minister of Justice of Luxembourg.

Mr. Frieden (Luxembourg) (*interpretation from French*): The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg attaches great importance to the fight against drugs. Many men and women in our societies have fallen victim to this scourge, which has developed at an unprecedented pace in the past few decades. The Government of Luxembourg believes that it is necessary to coordinate drug-control policies as much as possible at the international level with regard to both supply and demand.

The draft resolutions that we will be called upon to adopt here represent a qualitative leap forward. Indeed, this is the first time that commitments of this scope, dealing with the reduction of both supply and demand in the struggle against narcotic drugs, will be taken on a global scale.

Luxembourg supports such commitments without reservation. In this context, I should like to refer to the statement made on Monday by Mr. John Prescott, Deputy Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, who spoke on behalf of the European Union. That statement clearly has the support of my country.

We welcome in particular the well-balanced and integrated approach that has been chosen, which takes into account the many different aspects of the drug problem, as well as their interdependence. Such an approach is of necessity based on the principle of shared responsibility. The eradication of illicit crops, while being an essential aspect of any global strategy to combat drugs, must include the creation of alternative development programmes in countries that produce narcotic drugs.

However, Luxembourg would like to stress that the creation and the implementation of such programmes must take place in cooperation with the populations concerned and must respect fundamental principles of human rights. These development programmes must offer to the populations concerned real and sustainable alternatives and not simply force them to eradicate all their narcotic drug cultivation.

This action must be balanced by systematic prevention efforts on the part of our Governments. We hope in particular that education about the dangers of drugs will become obligatory for States in formulating their school programmes. Furthermore, the victims of drugs must receive appropriate treatment.

The effectiveness of the struggle against drugs will depend largely on the nature of international cooperation. The harmonization of anti-drug legislation is required at the global level as well as in every region. Both the United Nations and the European Union must contribute. Our laws and our legal authorities must continue to prosecute illicit traffic in all types of narcotic drugs, irrespective of their category or geographical origin.

Only international action that takes all of these considerations into account will be effective. That is why the Government of Luxembourg takes an active part in the efforts of the United Nations and the European Union in this area.

With regard to the United Nations, I should like to stress that Luxembourg is one of the few countries that has followed up article 5, paragraph 5, of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, which recommends financing intergovernmental bodies specialized in the fight against illicit traffic in narcotic drugs by using the proceeds confiscated from drug activities. The fund to combat the traffic in narcotic drugs, which Luxembourg set up to receive the proceeds confiscated from drug and money-laundering activities, has already, on many occasions, supported various United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) projects. This fund has also enabled Luxembourg to share such proceeds on several occasions with other countries involved in international legal cases.

Luxembourg appreciates the various efforts made by the United Nations system to develop activities to combat the illicit cultivation of narcotic drugs worldwide. In this context, we welcome in particular the activities outlined in the UNDCP action plan and those of the Executive Director, Mr. Pino Arlacchi.

In conclusion, Luxembourg attaches great importance to the question of combating money-laundering. In 1989, Luxembourg adopted the necessary legislative measures to prevent the financial sector from being abused for the laundering of drug-traffic money. Shortly thereafter, we supplemented these measures by ratifying the Vienna Convention and requiring professionals in the financial sector to report any suspicious operations to the legal authorities.

In addition to national efforts, Luxembourg has taken an active part in the work of various international bodies, in particular the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), of which my country is a founding member. In the most recent assessment, the FATF confirmed that Luxembourg was complying with 40 of its recommendations with regard to money-laundering.

The results of Luxembourg's efforts in this area show that an effective fight against the scourge of money-laundering is not incompatible with professional confidentiality, specifically in banking. In the fight against money-laundering, investigatory powers prevail over confidentiality, both in the course of domestic investigations and when fulfilling requests from abroad for judicial cooperation.

The Government of Luxembourg will continue its full cooperation with the United Nations and with other States to wage an effective battle against drugs and to help their victims.

The Acting President: I thank the Minister of Justice of Luxembourg for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Abdourahmane Sow, Minister of Town Planning and Habitat of Senegal.

Mr. Sow (Senegal) (*interpretation from French*): As we approach the end of the millennium, the question of drugs and psychotropic substances has become a central international concern, first and foremost because of the major role of drugs in today's international commerce. This is also because drugs are a social time-bomb that threatens the survival of societies and of families, including their most vulnerable members: the young. Drugs are a threat because modern communications, including electronic means, are used by international traffickers to carry out their activities.

No country is spared; no society is safe from the destructive effects of drugs; the trade in drugs is increasing exponentially, keeping pace with globalization. Indeed, apart from their well known harmful effects on physical, mental and moral health, we must emphasize the many pernicious connections that drugs create, consolidate and expand: connections with international organized crime, small-arms smuggling, terrorist groups and the financial and industrial entities that are used for money-laundering. Illicit drug production is gravely harming the development of crops and the achievement of food security in poor countries, and threatens and even compromises the national unity and security of States.

Africa occupies a central place in the illicit world drugs trade. Indeed, the 1997 report of the International Narcotics Control Board indicated that many African seaports and airports have become important transit sites for cocaine and heroin. Moreover, Africa continues to be a major supplier of cannabis and cannabis resin sold on illicit African, European and North American markets, despite the large seizures carried out and the vigorous action taken to eradicate the problem in recent years.

In the light of the dangerous development of the situation, we must carry out without delay an exhaustive, in-depth study of the drug situation in Africa. Such a study is all the more necessary as Africa still lacks adequate logistic, technological and financial means to combat drugs, and as it faces objective constraints linked, *inter alia*, to the permeable borders among its States, and to the deterioration of the political, economic, social and security situation in a number of its countries.

This state of affairs led the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) held at Yaoundé, Cameroon, in July 1996 to adopt a political declaration and a plan of action on combating the abuse and illicit trade in drugs in Africa.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) too has included the drug issue among its activities; in 1993 and 1994, on a proposal by Senegal, it adopted resolutions on the subject. An anti-drug coordination unit was established in June 1996 within the ECOWAS secretariat, a summit meeting of which was held at Abuja, Nigeria, in July 1997, at which a political declaration, a subregional plan of action to combat drugs and two conventions on judicial cooperation were adopted.

There is a need to strengthen internal and external consistency among the various anti-drug strategies and measures at the national, regional, subregional and international levels, and to integrate demand reduction programmes into the health and social policies of our States. Moreover, international and national action against drugs cannot be the sole responsibility of Governments. It requires the constant mobilization of public opinion, communities, non-governmental organizations, civil society, political actors, the media, the private sector, trade unions, and women's and youth organizations.

Senegal solemnly reaffirms its firm determination to help at all levels in the world struggle against the scourge of drugs, something it has done since its independence in 1960, clearly aware that its geostrategic position as a country open to the world thanks to modern seaport and airport infrastructure makes it a likely port of entry and transit site for traffickers. That is why in 1963 we adopted a law against the use and illicit trade in cannabis. In 1965 we created a National Narcotics Commission, which has now become the Inter-ministerial Committee to Combat Drugs, which has a permanent secretariat and which is responsible for the Government's anti-drug policy.

My country has ratified the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances and the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. In 1997 it adopted a drug code on the basis of multidisciplinary study; this is an important step in the process of harmonizing and adapting our national anti-drug legislation.

With the assistance of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), Senegal has drawn up and adopted an agreed national plan of action to combat the consumption and illicit trade in drugs for the period 1997-2000, with an overall cost estimated at $4.4 million. This plan, which will be funded in part with internal resources, aims, *inter alia*, at strengthening national capacities and the overall institutional anti-drug framework, at intensifying preventive action, at caring for addicts, and at reorganizing and strengthening suppression services.

Moreover, caring for addicts and ensuring that young people are educated and made aware of this problem have an important place in our national policy thanks to the effective endeavours of the Jacques Chirac Centre for awareness and information on the dangers of drugs, at Thiaroye in the Dakar suburbs, which was financed through French cooperation programmes, and of many other non-governmental organizations, with the support of the authorities and international cooperation.

The Government of Senegal is grateful to all friendly countries and international institutions whose assistance has enabled us to attain notable success in fighting drugs. Today more than ever, the international community must act together for the total eradication of the illicit cultivation of the plants that go to make the drugs that so sorely afflict our continent, and of the illicit traffic in drugs and psychotropic substances. It must also act quickly to ensure the effective implementation of international conventions on money-laundering and to strengthen procedures for information exchanges, cooperation and, specifically, judicial cooperation.

That is Senegal's message: a message of hope that the decisions adopted at this special session will help us make progress in our common worldwide struggle against drugs.

The Acting President: I thank the Minister of Town Planning and Habitat of Senegal for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Tuariki John Delamere, Minister of Customs and Associate Minister of Health of New Zealand.

Mr. Delamere (New Zealand): First, let me say that New Zealand recognizes that drug use is an international problem, and we are well aware of our responsibility to work with other countries to address this problem.

We have been striving to develop a comprehensive and balanced approach to the issue of illicit drug use. We seek to minimize drug-related harm by preventing drug use in the first place and reducing drug-related harm that is already occurring. Our National Drug Policy thus emphasizes the need for strong law enforcement, credible messages about drug-related harm and effective health services.

Our efforts to strike a balance between supply control, demand reduction and the management of drug problems have helped us reduce significantly the harm associated with illicit drugs in New Zealand. For example, we have significantly increased the number of people receiving methadone treatment. Many of these people have not only reduced their illicit drug use and needle-sharing, but have stabilized their family and working lives, reduced their involvement in criminal activity and generally improved their health status.

Another success story has been the introduction of a needle-exchange programme a decade ago, which has helped to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. In fact, our HIV infection rate of less than 1 per cent among injecting drug users is one of the lowest in the world. We are only now beginning to understand just how important this relatively simple and inexpensive programme has been in terms of helping protect the public health of all New Zealanders. I note that there are those who vehemently oppose methadone or needle-exchange programmes. For me, the answer, "Well, it works", seems to be the best response to these critics, who I suspect would have us blindly march down the road towards a "war on drugs", a philosophy that many would consider has not worked.

A few words now about two groups in New Zealand's population that I feel we have not focused on enough. One of the strong messages that I will be taking back from the special session is the need to do better at communicating to our young people, in credible and effective ways, the dangers of using any type of drug — including alcohol and cigarettes.

Some people may argue that, as the leaders of our nations, we cannot be seen to do anything that condones drug use, that by even talking openly about the relative risks of drug use, we might be taking away some of the social sanction against using drugs. But I do not think that we can afford the luxury of taking the moral high ground. Nor can we continue to keep our heads in the sand. Young people are using illicit drugs, whether we as parents or politicians like it or not. Providing honest and accurate information about the issues surrounding drug use is one of the keys to reducing drug-related harm, particularly for young people who might be tempted to experiment with drugs because of stories they have heard that downplay the risks, or things they may have seen in the media that glamorize drug use.

If we are going to stand a chance in convincing our young people about the risks of drug use, we need to address the hypocrisy that young people see when adults, including some politicians and other civic leaders, openly and legally abuse alcohol, then turn around and condemn youth for using marijuana. This sort of hypocrisy makes young people switch off, and you cannot really blame them.

In many countries the indigenous people are over-represented in national statistics on drug-use problems. This, unfortunately, is also true for Maori, New Zealand's indigenous people, to whom I belong. I think we need to do much better at empowering indigenous people to understand how they can control the factors that influence their health, such as drug use. They also need to be encouraged to participate much more fully in all levels of the health sector, and health services must be made more responsive to the needs of indigenous people. At the Healing Our Spirits Conference on indigenous people and substance misuse, sponsored by the World Health Organization and held in New Zealand earlier this year, it was heartening to hear so many indigenous people saying it was time to take responsibility for prevention work among their own people, rather than waiting for others to step in and provide treatment services once a member of their community had developed a drug problem. This issue of how to engage indigenous people in efforts to counter the world drug problem is something that I will be taking back to New Zealand, and, I will be saying that we clearly need to be doing better in this area.

Speaking now as my country's Minister of Customs, I think everyone recognizes the need for enhanced cooperation and coordination. I regret to say that New Zealand law-enforcement authorities are finding that, all too often, a number of other administrations are not committed to putting these sentiments into practice. It is ironic that, at a time when the need for international liaison and coordination has never been greater, we increasingly see barriers being put up to frustrate these types of objectives. It is vital that all law-enforcement agencies become much more comfortable at working in the international environment. It is equally important that they be encouraged to do so by individual Governments.

Finally, I want to say that the decision to create a Declaration on demand reduction is highly significant. It articulates the international importance of striking a balanced approach to drug policy, where supply reduction and demand reduction are seen as two equal and complementary strategies. New Zealand looks forward to being able to contribute to the preparation of action-oriented strategies for demand reduction in collaboration with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and other interested delegations.

When this special session closes and we all return to our respective countries, I do not think we can pat ourselves on the back, thinking that somehow we have solved the world drug problem. The challenge we all face now is to turn our commitment into action, both individually and in concert with one another.

And I agree that, together, "We can do it".

Let me assure the Assembly that New Zealand will be shouldering its burden to meet this challenge.

The Acting President: I thank the Minister of Customs and Associate Minister of Health of New Zealand for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Nii Okaija Adamafio, Minister of the Interior of Ghana.

Mr. Adamafio (Ghana): In February 1990, this Organization, conscious of the growing menace of drugs, held a special session of the General Assembly to confront that threat. At that meeting the then Secretary-General made a momentous pronouncement that underscored the drug problem in all its devastating dimensions. Let me refresh our memories of what he said:

> "We are assembled here today in response to the threat posed by drug abuse. Let us not underestimate this threat. We are talking about personal tragedy, severe damage to health, the disruption of society, economic breakdown, the undermining of democratic institutions, corruption, intimidation, violence and death.
>
> "Let us resolve that at this special session of the General Assembly words lead to action and that this action leads to success. Drug abuse is a time-bomb ticking away in the heart of our civilization. We must find measures to deal with it before it explodes and destroy us." (*A/S-17/PV.1, p. 9 and p. 16*)

Since then a lot has been done and achieved at the national, regional and global levels. In 1990, in response to the threatening drug problem at home, and in pursuance of our determination to address the international aspects of that problem, the Government of Ghana enacted the Narcotics Control and Enforcement Law. This is our most comprehensive legislation on drugs. It incorporates in its provisions the principles of the multi-disciplinary outline recommended by the United Nations Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, held in Vienna in June 1987. It established the Narcotics Control Board as the central coordinating government agency in all matters relating to drugs and has criminalized money-laundering and all proceeds from drugs.

Since then, our efforts at enforcement, as well as those concerning education and prevention, have had a positive impact on our society. However, our treatment and rehabilitation programme has not been as successful as we would have wished, largely because of the lack of infrastructural and financial resources.

Ghana has sought to pursue its international obligations by forging a close working relationship at both the bilateral and multilateral levels.

We have also been very active and relentless in efforts at subregional cooperation within the context of the Protocols of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on mutual assistance on crime and other, related matters.

A study of all reports available from the group of experts shows very clearly that drug barons and traffickers are now at their destructive worst, that the drug market continues to expand, that large quantities of drugs are being moved around and that drug monies continue to be laundered even in sensitive areas of the global economy.

This trend can become a nightmare if it is not ruthlessly confronted. This, however, requires not only the necessary political will, but also sustained financial resources, logistics and expertise in all the multi-disciplinary aspects of the drug war.

We must also pay urgent attention to the disturbing economic dimensions of the drug menace, which are seriously undermining our efforts. A growing number of young people are being enticed into the illicit drug industry as a matter of economic survival.

Ghana, like many other developing countries, has undertaken economic reforms to revitalize its economy. Structural adjustment, though necessary, can have painful short-term consequences for the more vulnerable sectors of society, particularly the rural and urban poor. The benefits of economic growth take time to be reflected in the incomes of many of these people, and they are therefore easily tempted to become involved in growing and trafficking in drugs and acting as couriers.

I would like to assure the Assembly that Ghana remains committed to the fight against drugs. It is imperative, however, that the developed nations in whose hands control of the world economy lies recognize that the most effective way to contain the flow of drugs from

poorer countries is to support our efforts towards sustainable economies.

Only then can our united efforts to deal with the global drug menace yield meaningful results.

I wish to avail myself of this opportunity to place on record Ghana's profound gratitude to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and other donors, especially the Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany, for their encouragement of and support for our drug control programme at home.

The Acting President: I thank the Minister of the Interior of Ghana for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Natheer Rashid, Minister of the Interior of Jordan.

Mr. Rashid (Jordan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Permit me, first, to congratulate the President on his conduct of the business of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly.

I would also like to thank all States, representatives and observers for the universal awareness they have shown in their participation in this session. Our common goal is to endeavour constantly to combat the greatest of all evils in order to save our societies from its endless dangers.

We in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, recognizing the danger of this evil, have taken a keen interest in combating it. We have given top priority to this matter. Jordan, as the Assembly knows, is neither a producer nor a consumer of these substances, but its geographical location, between the producing regions to the north and east and the consuming regions to the south and west, gives it increased responsibility as a safety valve and a line of defence in combating the growing trafficking operations. An additional factor is the nature of these smuggling operations, which take place over vast regions of Jordan, often over rough terrain.

We are doing our best, sparing no effort, to control the danger of this scourge to protect our citizens, help our neighbours and help protect the international community from its dangers, whether in the area of prevention or of pursuing smuggling operations. Our actions in this regard are essentially in line with the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme.

In the area of protection and prevention, which is one of the most important aspects of civilized societies, a public awareness campaign has been launched across all sectors of society. The Government of Jordan recognizes and appreciates the roles played by public and private organizations in raising the awareness of members of society in order to reduce this problem. The Ministry of Education has included in its curricula appropriate materials for students on the danger of narcotic drugs. Efforts are also being made by the Ministries of Higher Education, Culture, Youth and Information. They are supported in this endeavour by local newspapers and magazines. All these organizations have joined hands to guide and educate youth towards a brighter future free from the dangers of narcotic drugs.

There is another dimension to the concept of protection, which is the treatment of addicts and the comprehensive rehabilitation of former offenders convicted of dealing in drugs. The Ministries of Social Development, the Interior and Health have their own programmes for the rehabilitation and treatment of such people to give them a better chance to return to normal life and to be reintegrated into their communities as people who have become fully aware of the magnitude of their crimes and the damage that they inflicted upon themselves and those around them.

Religious and spiritual values play an important role here. Islam, like all divine religions, is one of the main pillars of the protective work in our country. Therefore, the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs trained and dispatched preachers to centres in various parts of the country to make people aware of the dangers of narcotic substances and the damage that results from dealing with drugs. The aim is to guide them to a healthy future.

In the area of legislation, one of the first legal instruments to be adopted after the inception of the Emirate of Transjordan, a law enacted in 1926, contained provisions relating to narcotics. This law evolved and was amended several times until it was replaced by the Law on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988, which gave drug addicts the right to treatment and saved them from punishment as a means of encouraging them to admit to society their guilt. On the other hand, it stiffened punishment for other aspects of dealing with drugs and psychotropic substances, such as illegal trafficking and involvement with international gangs. Punishment for such crimes has been made more severe in certain instances, commensurate with the increased incidence of such crimes in Jordan.

The law also provides for the seizure of illegal drug money. A bill dealing with money-laundering is currently under consideration.

All government agencies are engaged in the combat against drugs and are equipped with the personnel and equipment necessary for their operations in the desert regions of Jordan. We have ascertained, including through aerial surveys, that Jordan is free from any illicit crops, and therefore our data base reveals no manufacturing facilities.

In the international arena, the Government of Jordan stands by every friendly and sisterly State in accordance with its capacity and potentialities, especially regarding the sharing of information with other countries. Here I should like to emphasize the relations that my country enjoys with neighbouring countries and the bilateral agreements signed with them. We have even gone beyond the limits of these agreements for practical purposes, strengthening cooperation with neighbouring countries in terms of procedures concerning seizure and the exchange of comments and information.

We have always supported accession to international treaties in order to contain the drug problem. We have signed and acceded to many agreements in this regard. We also support the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and are ready to cooperate in order to achieve the goals which all of us aspire to.

We would like to emphasize that the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan annually spends a significant amount of its budget on combating drugs in order to achieve continuous progress in eradicating this problem. Our agencies have succeeded in reducing this dangerous activity by more than 20 per cent. We appeal to the international community and to the United Nations Fund to take these achievements into consideration and to enable us to energize and modernize our potentialities and equipment in order to tighten our grip on drug smugglers and dealers, who possess modern communication systems and sometimes have more effective means than we do.

The Acting President: I thank the Minister of the Interior of Jordan for his statement.

I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Poseci Waqalevu Bune, Chairman of the delegation of Fiji.

Mr. Bune (Fiji): In any war, battle or fight, having engaged the enemy, we must regularly assess our strategy, tactics and options to determine if we are marching to victory or losing the fight. My delegation therefore believes that this special session is most timely and provides a unique opportunity for such an assessment by the community of nations, and we are consequently pleased to participate in it.

The fight against the production and distribution of narcotic drugs was internationally enjoined through the adoption, some 10 years ago, of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and its precursors, which include the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs and the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances.

Fiji is a party to these Conventions and is fully committed and dedicated to international, regional and national efforts to create a drug-free world.

My delegation was saddened recently to learn that the illicit production of the opium poppy has more than tripled since 1985; that the illicit production of coca has doubled over the 1985-1994 period; and that psychotropic-substance abuse continues to climb. The data, while alarming, should motivate us to press on with greater intent and purpose to reverse the trend.

At the international and regional levels, we must facilitate and assist Governments to fully apply the provisions of drug- control treaties and intensify international and regional cooperation to prosecute the fight, and we must revisit our strategies, tactics and actions to effectively respond to the challenge.

In individual countries, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme should work closely with individual Governments, upon the Programme's own initiative or at the request of the Government, to develop and implement in-country strategies, plans and programmes to create a drug-free country. When we make all countries drug-free, we will have a drug-free world. Such collaboration could take many forms, including legislative action, more education and mass communication programmes, and more training to provide each country with the tools and skills to win the fight.

There is a major problem confronting many small developing States in their battle against illegal drugs, and that has to do with financing the battle. The scarce financial resources of States such as Fiji have to be applied to promoting economic and social development

and eradicating poverty from our midst. We need maximum official development assistance at the required international level of 0.7 per cent of gross national product to aid us in our war against illegal drugs. The drug trade has developed into illegal business ventures, creating illicit employment. Small developing States can attack that problem through increased investment to facilitate economic development by widening the business and industrial sector.

The bottom line is that people get involved in drugs as an illegal business because it is lucrative compared with the monetary value of export crops as recommended by the Government. In response, therefore, to reverse the situation, the Government will have to create an environment in which national economic development, including business and industrial expansion, is sufficiently large to offset and eradicate the existence of the drug trade. We must provide the people with legitimate business alternatives and productive employment.

Cannabis, or marijuana, is the crux of our illicit drug problem in Fiji and has become a major cause of social problems in the last decade. Our tropical climate allows for cannabis to be grown all over the country. While its use was initially localized, markets in urban areas have become lucrative for the illicit drug trade. There is little indication of the existence of hard drugs in Fiji.

In the drive to eliminate the illicit cultivation of marijuana, the Fiji police force has been actively involved in its eradication and seizure and in the arrest of offenders. Available information indicates a high level of trafficking in marijuana from rural to urban areas by drug traffickers, who use commercial vessels, fishing boats or public transport to take the drugs to the market.

It is a source of concern for us that since 1990, more than 50 per cent of Fiji's drug offenders have been in the age group of 17 to 25 years.

Members of our police force have so far taken part in educational programmes jointly conducted with the Ministry of Education in schools, villages, church groups and other civic groups, in order to raise public awareness of the dangers of drug use. We have targeted preventative and educational programmes at you people since, as alluded to earlier, they accounted for more than half of our drug offenders in 1997.

Our Government has recognized that a holistic approach is necessary to combat the evils of drugs. Towards that end, it has presented to Parliament a Substance Abuse Advisory Council Bill which is aimed at developing a comprehensive and substantive abuse-prevention, education and research programme in Fiji. The Council is mandated to encourage, promote, sponsor and coordinate research into the use of liquor and substance abuse, which is defined as including liquor; psychoactive, pharmaceutical or illicit drugs; volatile substances such as petrol and some fluorocarbons; and anabolic steroids, as well as problems associated therewith in Fiji. This is not to mention the educational, dissemination, collation and monitoring role of the Council.

My Government is equally aware that to succeed in the global fight against illicit drugs, it is necessary to have legislation which would facilitate the extradition of fugitives, mutual legal assistance and transfer of proceedings. I am pleased to announce that Fiji has enacted the Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Act and Proceeds of Crimes Act, respectively, to complement our Extradition Act.

In conclusion, my delegation will fully support the adoption of the three draft resolutions — the Political Declaration, the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction, and "Measures to enhance international cooperation to counter the world drug problem".

The Acting President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of Fiji for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jacques Louis Boisson, Chairman of the delegation of Monaco.

Mr. Boisson (Monaco) (*interpretation from French*): The authorities of Monaco largely share the sense that only increased international cooperation, based on steadfast political determination, can curb the threat posed by the international drug trade and all the criminal activities associated with it.

Nowadays, States have at their disposal the legal instruments and institutions necessary to fight this scourge. We must now combine our efforts and pool our experience in order to offer, especially to the young generations, a drug-free society.

The Principality of Monaco has ratified all the international texts on drugs. On several occasions, it has altered its drug laws to correlate them with these

instruments. The laundering of drug money has been criminalized since 1985 and the scope of this crime has been extended and diversified in accordance with the 1988 United Nations Convention. In 1993, a broad criminal statute on the laundering of property and capital from illicit sources was also added to our penal code. These provisions target the fruit of serious offences committed in the context of organized crime and, in particular, extortion, kidnapping and illegal confinement, procurement and arms trafficking.

The legislative work on money-laundering was completed in implementation of the 40 recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force created in 1989 by the seven most industrialized countries. Financial institutions are obliged to participate in the battle against laundering money from drug-trafficking or the activities of organized crime. An information and control service for financial flows was established, in the framework of bilateral agreements with France, to oversee the implementation of these provisions. The small size of Monaco's territory clearly facilitates the application of these recommendations and effective control over their implementation.

As a founding member of the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol), the Principality of Monaco contributes to the force's work in the fight against drug-trafficking and addiction.

The Government of the Principality will continue to support unreservedly the anti-drug efforts of the United Nations and expresses every confidence in the activities of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme.

The provisions of the three draft resolutions prepared for adoption at this special session of the General Assembly should give renewed impetus to the relentless battle to eliminate the devastating consequences of the production, sale, demand, traffic and illicit distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances — criminal activities of vast scope and international dimensions.

The reaffirmed political will in the battle against this worldwide scourge will be successful only through enhanced and effective international cooperation. This cooperation must be legal, of course, but also undertaken in the field of precursor and synthetic drug control, demand reduction and alternative development programmes and activities. It is through responsibility shared by Governments and civil society that the common struggle against the global drug problem should be waged, objectively and with an approach balanced between education and prevention, on the one hand, and suppression and rehabilitation on the other.

The consumption of drugs has grown inexorably in the past 10 years. All are agreed on that. If we can better understand, in order better to attack, the causes of this alarming and insidious phenomenon, which finds all too fertile soil in the malaise of contemporary society, we should be able to intervene more effectively. Poverty, economic uncertainty and the loss of traditional values acquired through the ages probably contribute to the despair of a growing number of young people fleeing the artificial paradises and pain of a world in upheaval.

It is therefore our duty to restore hope to these somewhat disoriented young people; to be tuned into them, as is the Monegasque association "Jeunes j'Ecoute"; and to guarantee care and rehabilitation to the most desperate drug addicts, as do many non-governmental organizations that deserve our tribute. For many of these people, hope can shed light on a future that once seemed bleak.

The Acting President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of Monaco for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. John de Saram, Chairman of the delegation of Sri Lanka.

Mr. De Saram (Sri Lanka): The views that have been expressed by the many distinguished speakers who have preceded me are views with which the delegation of Sri Lanka, on whose behalf I have the great honour to address this special session of the General Assembly, would in large measure wholeheartedly concur.

Much has been done - and much has in fact been done under United Nations auspices in the last 50 years - to address the subject of drug abuse and the questions of supply, demand and the links in between; yet there is still so much more that always seems to still lie ahead.

This special session of the General Assembly will very shortly, in its global approach to the vast and complex field of drug-abuse control, urge the adoption and implementation, at the international and national levels, of a further range of specific programmes, pursuant to the Global Strategy and the Global Programme of Action adopted at earlier sessions of the General Assembly and, in particular, at the seventeenth special session in 1990.

There is much that will be required by way of international cooperation — global and interregional, regional and subregional, bilateral, formal and informal arrangements. More importantly, there is much that will be called for in national, local and family endeavour. As the representative of Saint Lucia so eloquently reminded us last evening, let us hope that deeds match words.

As regards the international cooperation in South Asia, I would like to inform the General Assembly that Sri Lanka will next month assume the chairmanship of the Association of the seven countries of South Asia — Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka — the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, popularly known as SAARC. The subject of drug-abuse control in the region will be carefully considered, pursuant to the Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances adopted by SAARC in 1990, and also in the light of the results of this special session of the General Assembly.

As to Sri Lanka itself and our own national endeavours, the National Dangerous Drugs Control Board has requested me to inform the Assembly that the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline of Future Activities in Drug Abuse Control adopted by the General Assembly in 1987 and the Global Programme of Action adopted by the General Assembly in 1990 have been enormously helpful in guiding us in the formulation of a statement of overall national policy on drugs, in the creation and expansion of institutions, in the consolidation and updating of the drug-abuse laws of Sri Lanka through statutory enactments, and also in the development of specific programmes. These programmes include the treatment of drug dependency in public and private facilities, rehabilitation, preventive education and, where appropriate, the entrustment of drug-addicted offenders to non-penal facilities.

I have also been requested to say to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme that we are very grateful for the advice and assistance provided to Sri Lanka in the formulation of its Statement of National Policy on Drugs and its Master Plan for Drug Control. We look forward to the International Drug Control Programme's continuing advice and assistance in their implementation.

This special session of the General Assembly includes on its agenda a number of items pertaining to the restriction and reduction of the supply of drugs, the restriction and reduction of the demand for drugs and, additionally, the measures that ought to be taken against the laundering of the colossal amounts of money reaped by those engaged in what we now call the illicit drug industry. These are matters of the greatest importance.

The President returned to the Chair.

Yet we, the delegation of Sri Lanka, would also ask this special session of the General Assembly to give careful attention as well to a phenomenon that has crept upon the world within perhaps the last three decades — namely, the close relationships that we are told often obtain among those who engage in the illicit trade in narcotics, in the illicit trade in arms, in the illicit processes of money-laundering and in the funding of other criminal activities, including the funding of the cold, calculating inhumanity of terrorism.

I would, in this connection, like to read to the Assembly the following two sentences from the report of the Secretary-General of July 1997 on proposals for United Nations reform.

> "Government authority and civil society are increasingly threatened by transnational networks of crime, narcotics, money-laundering and terrorism. Access by underworld groups to sophisticated information technologies and weaponry as well as to the various instrumentalities through which the global market economy functions are vastly increasing the potential power and influence of these groups, posing a threat to law and order and to legitimate economic and political institutions." *[A/51/950, para. 143]*

I congratulate the Secretary-General for those words of warning; I congratulate the Secretariat for the close relationship that now obtains between the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and the United Nations Centre for International Crime Prevention, under the excellent, dynamic leadership of Mr. Pino Arlacchi.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of Sri Lanka for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Robert E. Millette, Chairman of the delegation of Grenada.

Mr. Millette (Grenada): My delegation congratulates you, Mr. President, for the effective and efficient manner in which you have conducted this special session. My Government has made and will continue to

make every effort locally, regionally and internationally to eradicate poverty and to rid the country of the scourge of drugs.

Research data show that there is a direct correlation between unemployment and substance abuse. Recent statistical data collected by Grenada's National Drug Avoidance Committee show that the majority of people who were arrested for drug related crimes were unemployed or underemployed. Therefore, we ask the developed countries to assist Grenada in its quest to eradicate poverty by providing meaningful sources of employment and training for everyone, especially for males between the ages of 20 and 35.

My Government feels that sustainable eradication programmes must be accompanied by the provision of regular income incentives. One of the sources of income in Grenada is the Micro Enterprise Programme, which is aimed at encouraging private sector entrepreneurship throughout the country. We want to stress that successful eradication programmes must be accompanied by the provision of regular income incentives. The Micro Enterprise project has gone a long way to improve the living standards of Grenadians, especially in the rural areas.

There are many socio-economic factors that have contributed to the drug problem. Some of our young people perceive the drug dealers and drug traffickers as positive role models. The Grenada Government is actively and aggressively seeking to make farming, manufacturing, fishing and other business ventures more available and more attractive to our young people. We ask our friends to assist us in these endeavours.

The international narcotics control report compiled by the United States Embassy in Barbados for 1997-1998 praised the Grenada National Drug Avoidance Committee for having a strong and viable organization and for involving agencies such as the police and customs services. However, Grenada will continue to make every effort to reduce demand and to educate our people, young and old alike, about the effects of illicit drugs.

Grenada is an active member of the Regional Security System, an eastern Caribbean initiative to enhance military cooperation. Grenada is also a member of the Maritime Movement Information System, a project funded by the United States. This system allows regional coast guards to track vessels as they move through the eastern Caribbean. My Government supports the view that a new global approach is needed in our fight against illicit drugs. We, large and small countries alike, must seek to find solutions to supply, demand, money-laundering, corruption and the many social ills that result from the use of illicit drugs.

In 1971 and 1988 respectively, my Government acceded to two of the four United Nations conventions: the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances and the 1988 Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.
In July 1987, an Agreement for the Prevention, Control and Suppression of the Consumption of, and Trafficking in, Narcotic and Psychotropic Substances was signed between the Governments of Grenada and the Republic of Venezuela. Additional treaties and letters of agreement have been signed between Grenada, the United States, the United Kingdom and other developed countries. Grenada also became a member of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission during the twenty-sixth regular session of the Organization of American States.

My Government sees the drug trade as multidimensional, since it cuts across political, economic, geographical, social, legal, health and cultural spheres. Therefore, it is imperative that the developed and developing countries join hands in finding solutions that are holistic and practical. The solutions and strategies that we develop at this special session must tackle the drug problem on two fronts: the users and the producers.

My Government's Integrated Drug Reduction Strategy concentrates on the following areas: institutional strengthening through measures such as the Drug Avoidance Secretariat in the Ministry of Education; demand reduction, through programmes in collaboration with the police, customs, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Legal Affairs; supply reduction, through cargo and passenger examination and sea and land surveillance; treatment and rehabilitation through the Carlton House and Grand Bacolet rehabilitation centres and other facilities; legislative and judicial apparatus; international and inter-agency cooperation; and economic and cultural development.

In 1986, the Government appointed the Drug Avoidance Committee to formulate and implement policies to reduce the demand for narcotics. The Royal Grenada Police Force and the Ministry of Education conduct drug-abuse-resistance programmes in primary schools throughout the country.

The fight against the production, use and trafficking of drugs is no easy task. However, the Government and people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petit Martinique are totally and absolutely committed to this fight. It is our hope that this special session will result in a closer working relationship among Governments, international agencies, community groups and non-governmental organizations. We are convinced that it is only by working together that we can create a drug-free world.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of Grenada for his statement.

I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. George Saliba, Chairman of the delegation of Malta.

Mr. Saliba (Malta): Malta welcomes the convening of this special session of the General Assembly devoted to the fight against drugs. Today, as a result of revolutionary changes in technology, as well as of new and advanced means of communications and transport, organized crime has found what it considers to be fertile ground to consolidate its established illegal activities. Without any shadow of doubt, the drug problem has become transnational and of interest to all States. We cannot but underline the importance of a concerted effort to tackle this issue, which has become a scourge, at the national and global levels. We all know that no one can claim immunity from the ripple effect of the drug phenomenon — a phenomenon that represents a threat not only to individuals and communities, but also to security and stability within States and regions. This was emphasized by Mr. Pino Arlacchi, Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNCDP), in his address to the forty-first session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, when he stated that

> "No country is too small. No region is unimportant. Everyone, both as individual people and as societies, are adversely affected by illegal drugs".

My delegation commends the Executive Director of UNDCP for the enthusiasm, vigour and foresight he demonstrated in taking up his new duties and in addressing the drug problem.

With regard to the question of required funding for UNDCP programmes, the provisions of article 5, paragraph 5(b)(1) of the 1988 Vienna Convention may be utilized further as a source of funding drug control and prevention programmes and for UNDCP programmes, which are in need of such funding more than ever.

Malta welcomes the consolidation by the Secretary-General of several relevant functions into one single Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention; under the leadership of Mr. Arlacchi. We also welcome the appointment by the Secretary-General of a group of high-level experts to undertake a comprehensive review of how the efforts to combat illicit drugs have evolved within the United Nations system since the General Assembly established UNDCP in 1991.

The draft Political Declaration calls for the establishment or strengthening of regional or subregional mechanisms whereby regions and subregions may be able to share their experiences and conclusions resulting from the implementation of national strategies. In this respect, the Government of Malta is fully in support of the initiatives taken within the Euro-Med process, in both Barcelona and Valletta, to pursue actively a dialogue and cooperation on combating organized crime and all aspects of the illicit drug trade.

In Malta, as in most countries, the drug problem is a very real one. The Government of Malta has recognized the seriousness of the situation and, in its determined fight against drug traffickers, has taken appropriate remedial measures by developing an intensive and comprehensive strategy consisting of making enforcement more effective, improving control at ports of entry, updating the laws within the context of international conventions, developing preventive measures, improving treatment, rehabilitation and social support structures, and cooperating through bilateral or multilateral agreements or arrangements, especially with States bordering the Mediterranean, to strengthen the infrastructure needed for effective control and prevention of illicit trafficking through Malta.

The Government of Malta is committed to fighting illicit drug-trafficking with ever-increasing vigour. The Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, the main legislation, has been amended to provide for, *inter alia*, life sentencing for very serious trafficking; 10-year sentences for other cases of trafficking; compulsory prison sentencing in the case of trafficking, cultivation and importation; confiscation of the property of convicted traffickers; pre-trial financial investigations; the criminalization of the offence of money-laundering; and increased international cooperation in this field.

The laws governing the monitoring of drug traffickers, the confiscation of their assets and other measures to strengthen police operations against

trafficking are being brought into line with those of modern European countries. At the same time, preventive programmes have been implemented to raise anti-drug awareness among parents, young people and children. In addition, the Government is also supporting and seeking the closest possible collaboration and cooperation with all voluntary organizations in running rehabilitation programmes. No effort is being spared to ensure that voluntary organizations are considered as equal partners with Government ones.

New measures were announced last February which will permit the introduction of strategic and administrative structures to obtain the coordination needed in the management of a national policy on drug and alcohol abuse. To that end, a new coordinating commission has been set up to supervise the operation of government agencies and voluntary bodies, to monitor the implementation of the national policy on substance abuse and to advise the Government on changes in social policy.

Malta's geographical location may offer strategic attractions to those involved in drug-trafficking. For our part, we have been able to remain in control of the situation. However, in order to maintain this momentum, Malta needs more technical assistance, particularly in the fields of surveillance, information sharing and advisory services in order to strengthen its capability to combat illicit drug-trafficking.

Today more than ever, the drug problem needs to be tackled in a more direct and coordinated manner. The prevention and reduction of demand, control of supply, suppression of illicit trafficking, and treatment and rehabilitation of victims are four areas none of which can be considered in isolation. It is to be recalled that the draft political declaration to be adopted at this special session specifically reaffirms our unwavering determination and commitment to overcome the world drug problem through domestic and international strategies to reduce both the illicit supply of drugs and the demand for them.

Malta renews its full support for the concerted efforts being made by the international community to control the world drug problem. We pledge our unreserved commitment to achieving a society free of drugs. Undoubtedly, our primary duty is to ensure that the efforts we undertake are continuous, balanced and concerted, both nationally and internationally. We could be on the threshold of achieving notable successes in controlling one of the worst scourges to afflict the human race for a good number of years. It would be unforgivable if we were to leave the twentieth century with a legacy of unfulfilled promises.

The tasks ahead are not easy, but the plight of millions of young people worldwide whose lives are threatened by drugs should be enough to consolidate our resolve. Our commitment is a debt we owe to our children, to our young people, and to future generations, so that they may be able to live healthy lives in a safe environment.

The President: I thank the chairman of the delegation of Malta for his statement.

I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Rex Stephen Horoi, chairman of the delegation of the Solomon Islands.

Mr. Horoi (Solomon Islands): The rapid growth of international crime is having an impact on all countries. Small island developing states such as Solomon Islands, however, are especially vulnerable because of our geographical location and characteristics and our limited interdiction and enforcement capabilities. This applies particularly to drug-trafficking and the violence and financial crimes associated with it. Moreover, the drug problem and its related ills pose a serious threat to our security and to the social and economic fabric of our society.

The drug problem is of serious concern to Solomon Islands. It is now evident that illicit drugs are locally grown and widely used. The detection and confiscation of illegal drugs since the late 1980s, including the discovery of 2.6 tons of compressed cannabis in 1989 on one of our remote islands, confirms that major drug-trafficking through the Solomon Islands is a reality. In the absence of an effective intelligence network, it is difficult to detect and identify Solomon Islands nationals engaged in the illicit drug business, let alone the international traffickers crossing our borders. Although we assume that the drugs are brought into the Solomon Islands by a variety of means, customs and police reports show they enter mainly by post or through the international air terminal serving the capital. Furthermore, the detection of coca leaf cultivation last February as well as three recent heroin cases indicate that more serious and dangerous drugs now threaten our nation.

Confronting the rapid growth of illicit drug activities in my country and contributing to an effective global drug control strategy are daunting tasks. There is much

to be done in terms of reviewing and strengthening current national legislation and policies on drugs, providing adequate professional training, increasing access to effective and appropriate equipment, developing an efficient intelligence system, and promoting demand reduction strategies that will ultimately erode the market for drugs. The use of modern technology and communications in drug-trafficking and money-laundering must be countered by professionally trained personnel using reliable intelligence links and effective detection equipment.

Difficulties notwithstanding, we have undertaken several drug control initiatives. The Royal Solomon Islands Police, for example, is embarking on a campaign to combat illicit drugs by upgrading its drug unit and strengthening its intelligence system. Moreover, a campaign was launched in February of this year to foster community support in the fight against illicit drugs. Public talks and school visits to foster basic drug awareness and education are under way, but on a small scale. There is a need to expand and extend such activities, especially in the rural communities.

In addition, an anti-drug campaign committee to devise strategies for the effective control of drugs in the Solomon Islands has been proposed. This body will involve the various sectors of civil society. It must be noted that the active involvement of all sectors of civil society is fundamental, and is a prerequisite for any practical and workable drug control strategy, especially where one of the key objectives is to reduce the demand for drugs among youth.

My delegation fully concurs that the drug problem is a complex global challenge demanding a comprehensive global solution on both the supply and the demand sides. Our efforts at the national level, therefore, must be complemented and supplemented at the regional and international levels. Various regions and subregions have initiated and adopted certain drug control measures, apart from organizing workshops and seminars. In our own subregion, for instance, the Honiara Declaration of 1992 focuses on legislative drafting assistance, improvements in the drug enforcement capabilities of regional police and customs officials, and help in training and information exchange. Additional resources must be mobilized to give better effect to such regional initiatives and to encourage and facilitate inter-regional and inter-State cooperation in all aspects of drug control. In particular, my delegation supports the recommendation to intensify international cooperation in prevention, law enforcement and prosecution.

Many States have also begun to address the drug problem through adherence to relevant international conventions such as the United Nations Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. However, ratifying conventions without the resources and capacity to implement them means very little, especially in view of the urgency of responding effectively to the challenges at hand. To counter the demand for and the sale of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and related activities such as money-laundering, developing and least developed countries, including my own, need the assistance of the international community, particularly with respect to intelligence gathering and analysis, detection and prosecution.

In our judgement, however, the international community's first priority in aiding smaller nations, like my own, is to help us develop appropriate information networks and secure assistance for training to maximize our own national efforts. It is in this context that my delegation firmly supports the call for an action-oriented outcome of this session.

Finally, in countries where the drug problem is relatively new, apart from using strong law enforcement methods, we must invest in creating alternative economic opportunities. In this regard, my delegation recognizes the efforts made by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and other organizations. I believe, however, that proactive engagement will go a long way towards diminishing the drug problem. It is far more costly, especially for the least developed countries, to deal with the needs of a drug-addicted population than to initiate preventive strategies early.

My delegation joins previous speakers in reiterating the need for a long-term and holistic approach to the problem of illicit drugs. Solomon Islands is small and vulnerable. We are no longer the place that time or the international drug traffickers have forgotten. Threatened is the extended family — the foundation of Solomon Islands society. Committed as my Government is to the efforts against illicit drugs, we know the necessity of international cooperation.

A concrete outcome of this special session will therefore be a global commitment that will help to ensure the sustainability of the cultural and moral structure of our societies as we begin the new millennium.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of the Solomon Islands.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Roland Y. Kpotsra, Chairman of the delegation of Togo.

Mr. Kpotsra (Togo) (*interpretation from French*): First of all, may I extend to you, Sir, the most sincere appreciation of the Togo delegation for the skill with which you have been leading our work, which no doubt will ensure the desired success of our deliberations.

I also take this opportunity to extend my most earnest thanks to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs for the outstanding work it has done to prepare for this twentieth special session of the General Assembly.

With a population of 4.5 million inhabitants, of which 50 per cent are young people under 15 and 51.3 per cent are women, Togo has set itself guidelines based on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and is working tirelessly to promote its harmonious and sustainable development in peace and security. In this context, it has deliberately made the campaign against organized crime, juvenile delinquency and the abuse and illicit trafficking of drugs and psychotropic substances one of its priorities.

A veritable plague at the end of this century, the drug phenomenon today is worldwide and its harmful effects spare no State, whatever its size or its level of development throughout the world, to varying degrees, the cultivation and production of many types of drugs, used by a large sector of the world population, are on the increase.

In Togo, the recent discovery of cannabis plantations over relatively large areas of land and the clandestine introduction into the country of enormous quantities of cocaine, heroin and psychotropic substances from certain countries of Latin America and Asia are sufficient to highlight the seriousness of the phenomenon, which was particularly exacerbated by the socio-political troubles of 1990 to 1993. Cannabis cultivation, undertaken both by nationals and by foreigners who have settled in our country, not only feeds local demand, which is constantly increasing, but also produces a surplus, which is exported; in particular to Europe.

Heroin and cocaine, on the other hand, are brought into our country in transit towards other destinations. By way of illustration, in 1997 we confiscated 81 kilograms of heroin, 13 kilograms of cocaine, 1,107 kilograms of cannabis and 11,000 psychotropic tablets. The harmful effects of the abusive consumption of these products on the health of our people are becoming alarming and might very well become catastrophic, especially in economic terms.

In the face of this situation, which is a deplorable one, to say the least, it is absolutely necessary that our States, individually and collectively, intensify their efforts and take energetic steps required by the seriousness of this phenomenon in order effectively to combat the illicit movement of drugs.

For its part, the Togolese Government, under the dynamic leadership of the President of our Republic, has with determination committed itself in recent years to waging a merciless struggle against this scourge. As a party to the three international drug conventions, it has not hesitated to adhere to important related subregional instruments, such as the Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters of the Economic Community of West African States and a convention on judicial cooperation and mutual assistance among member States of the Council of the Entente.

Furthermore, on 18 March 1998, Togo adopted a new law on drug control. This law conforms to the 1988 Convention, which takes into account the areas of prevention, suppression, and treatment and social rehabilitation of the drug addict, as well as the area of money-laundering.

Along with this legal arsenal, a decree by the President of the Republic created the National Anti-Drug Committee, an interministerial body for coordinating the anti-drug struggle in Togo. This Committee has rapidly begun to define a national policy replete with strategies. The approach adopted is multi-sectoral, global and well-balanced.

Above and beyond activities against drugs undertaken by the Gendarmerie, the police and customs officials through their anti-drug brigades, preventive action has been undertaken with non-governmental organizations, linked together in an anti-drug network that has been waging a vigorous education campaign throughout the country.

It is obvious that, despite the efforts it has made, our Government will not be able to deploy the resources it needs for its anti-drug policy. Indeed, the effective implementation of this policy requires, *inter alia*, strengthening the capacity for the laboratory analysis of

narcotic drugs, creating anti-drug units, setting up establishments to treat drug addicts, organizing training programmes on techniques for identifying money-laundering, and appropriate training of judges. As will be seen, the task is enormous and can be carried out only if the Government's efforts are supported by significant bilateral or multilateral assistance.

There is now a consensus that responsibility for combating the world drug problem is a common one and must be shared. In a word, the struggle against the production, illicit sale, trafficking and distribution of drugs is a worldwide campaign which no State can avoid and in which the international community must play its full role, especially in regard to international control.

Here, we pay tribute to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme for its work in western Africa, and particularly in Togo, and welcome the convening of this special session.

The Togolese delegation expects documents to emerge that will strengthen international, regional and subregional solidarity and cooperation and to initiate an ongoing regular dialogue with the United Nations, its various bodies and Member States so as to more easily eliminate the scourge of drugs. The adoption in this regard of a true universal social contract would therefore be indispensable as a basis for this cooperation and to pave the way for stricter and more effective international control.

At one time, former Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar quite rightly pointed out:

> "The growing problem of narcotic drugs has become a major international anxiety, not least because of its effect on the future of children and young people. It has become more and more evident that international and multinational efforts provide the best hope for arresting and reducing the traffic in and use of drugs, which have such an appalling effect on both individuals and the societies in which they live." (*ST/DPI/906, p. i*)

Togo endorses this point of view and, at this historic meeting, urges the international community to go beyond the limits of simple analysis to explore the best ways and means and consider the best measures that could help to encourage the struggle and eliminate this scourge at the dawn of the next millennium.

Our fight against the scourge of drugs is a major endeavour, a long-term task that is difficult to carry out and can be accomplished only if we unite our efforts to that purpose and if we truly invest our determination and the appropriate resources.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of Togo for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Moses M. Dlamini, Chairman of the delegation of Swaziland.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): Allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to extend the warm greetings and good wishes of His Majesty King Mswati III, Her Majesty the Queen Mother, the Swazi Government and the entire Swazi nation.

We meet at this special session of the General Assembly, eight years after the seventeenth special session, to draft a more comprehensive and integrated approach to international drug control, in view of the challenges we continue to face as a result of the alarming increase in the abuse, illicit production and trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

Nevertheless, the continued efforts which express the undying quest and determination of the United Nations, Member States and civil society to eradicate this problem, which undermines development and socio-economic and political stability, both within and among nations, are indeed commendable.

While the poor economic performance of some countries, coupled with political instability and turmoil, makes them fertile ground for illicit drug-trafficking and organized crime, it is equally true that, where positive political and economic elements necessary for development exist, it is simpler for criminals to transport and distribute illicit drugs across borders. This is a tragic reality that poses a serious challenge to the world community.

It is extremely disturbing and most unfortunate that illegal drugs find their way to innocent children and young people. It is also unfortunate that women have of late joined men in the criminal activities of illicit drug-trafficking and use and are increasingly engaged in these activities.

The effects of illicit drugs on the individual and the family should not be underestimated. Illicit drugs are a

major health problem; they bring about disruption and disharmony within the family. They adversely affect economic and development initiatives, and they contribute to the disintegration of societies.

We should not ignore the fact that the consequences of poverty have a linkage to the widespread involvement of our young people in drug use and trafficking. While the United Nations is charged with the important task of eradicating poverty, Member States must not despair in their quest to ensure the availability of social services for their citizens. The absence of employment opportunities may lead to such problems as drug use and trafficking.

The immense danger and threat posed to societies by drug-trafficking and its links to terrorism, transnational crime, money-laundering and illegal trafficking in arms makes it necessary for Governments to cooperate in dealing with this threat, thus preventing the channelling of funds to and between those engaged in such activities. The extent to which this problem has expanded beyond national and regional boundaries demands that the international community continue to address the drug problem collectively.

The necessity for Governments to intensify efforts in enacting pertinent laws as well as strengthening national judicial systems in this context cannot be overemphasized. My delegation therefore fully supports the draft Declaration which is about to be adopted today. This is particularly so since it sets target dates for the establishment and strengthening of national legislation, legal structures and other pertinent programmes. Without the promulgation of firm laws and regulations, efforts to curb the drug problem will continue to be frustrated.

Furthermore, it is also important to carry out effective drug control measures with other States in accordance with international instruments, and to promote judicial cooperation in such measures as extradition and mutual legal assistance. Anti-drug legislation must be harmonized throughout the world, and this requires the commitment of all United Nations Member States and their cooperation at all levels.

At the national level, the Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations, is vigorously engaged in drug-awareness programmes targeting the most vulnerable groups, particularly young people. The main objective of such campaigns is to educate the nation and communities about the dangers and risks of drug use and abuse. If the nation, particularly children and young people, knows the truth about the consequences of harmful drugs and their illegality, they are then empowered to make informed decisions.

Efforts aimed at curbing the scourge of drugs and its manifestations in the form of corruption, money-laundering and trafficking in illicit arms are enhanced with the enacting and updating of relevant legislation, which seeks to strengthen the role of law enforcement agencies. The new proposed legislation, which is at various stages of promulgation, include the following: the drugs of abuse bill; the medicines and related substances control bill; the foreign evidence bill; the proceeds of crime bill; and the money-laundering bill.

It is also worth pointing out that the Kingdom of Swaziland is fully engaged in efforts to address the question of corruption, which is an integral part of drug-trafficking and other forms of organized crime. In this regard, in March 1998, an independent anti-corruption unit was officially set up and launched.

I should like to further stress the point that national efforts aimed at eradicating the illegal cultivation of and trafficking in cannabis require financial support. Effective control of cannabis cultivation requires destruction of the crops and seeds. Accessibility to isolated, mountainous cannabis-growing areas could be greatly enhanced by the services of helicopters.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Swaziland pledges its full support for continued efforts by the United Nations system at stopping the illicit trafficking and abuse of drugs and thereby ensuring the safety of our societies and the entire world. We particularly appreciate the efforts made by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, the effects of which have been felt within the Southern African Development Community, of which Swaziland is a member.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of Swaziland for his statement.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

United Nations A/S-20/PV.9

General Assembly
20th Special Session

Official Records

9th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 10 June 1998, 7 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Udovenko . . . . . (Ukraine)

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

General debate

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Andrew Scott, Solicitor-General of Canada.

Mr. Scott (Canada): Like many countries, Canada views its drug problem as serious. Canada considers the drug problem to be a major health and public safety issue. We are particularly concerned about drug abuse among our young people. We are dealing with our drug problem through a balanced approach aimed at reducing the supply of drugs as well as the demand for them.

Canada's approach to the drug problem is outlined in a document entitled "Canada's Drug Strategy", which has been distributed to members. The long-term goal of this balanced strategy is to reduce the harm to individuals, families and communities associated with drugs and alcohol. This strategy is led by Canada's Ministry of Health, which in itself speaks to our approach to dealing with this problem.

We are also well aware that drugs feed organized crime. Just as the United Nations is strengthening its efforts to combat organized crime, so are we. The Government of Canada has made organized crime its top law-enforcement priority. Our approach is aimed at taking the profits out of drug-trafficking.

Although Canada's climate precludes the cultivation of either coca bush or opium poppy, we do produce cannabis, especially that which is grown indoors. Indeed, we have become an exporting country. Cannabis is the most commonly used illicit drug in Canada, followed by cocaine and heroin, with a moderate use of synthetic drugs. We are also concerned about the availability of raw materials used in the manufacture of synthetic drugs and the fact that information about their manufacture is freely available, including on the Internet.

Therefore, as a result of the challenges we face, the Government of Canada has established a number of priorities within our national drug strategy. These include development of responses to address the significant harm associated with injection drug use. In this regard, Canada is experiencing a particularly serious health crisis in Vancouver, with a high level of overdose deaths and one of the highest rates of HIV infection in developed countries. We are working closely with our provincial and local partners to identify innovative approaches to prevention and treatment.

Another priority focuses on enhancing our efforts, and involving youth in finding solutions, to prevent the use of drugs by young people. Canada is also enhancing its focus on large-scale trafficking and the seizure of the proceeds of crime. Through the introduction of key legislation, we have provided the police with the tools required to deal effectively with organized crime. We are also working on a national strategy on organized crime. As part of our efforts in that area, we will introduce

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legislation in our Parliament this fall to deal with mandatory suspicious-transaction reporting.

Here at the special session, Canada is particularly pleased to see consideration of the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction. Demand reduction is an essential part of a balanced approach to the drug problem, something that we have long practised in Canada and advocated in the United Nations and elsewhere for some time. We believe that the Declaration is important in that it will mark the first time an international agreement has been reached on the basic principles of demand reduction.

Canada was honoured to have been the host of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) youth event, Youth Vision Jeunesse, which brought more than 200 energetic young people from more than 24 countries to Banff, Alberta, in April to identify best practices in youth substance-abuse prevention. The "Vision from Banff" is a powerful one, coming from the young people themselves. I hope that everyone has heard the message and had a chance to see the video and read the document. Working to prevent substance abuse among young people is one of the priorities of UNDCP, and one which Canada will continue to support.

(*spoke in French*)

Canada believes that regional cooperation is a crucial tool in combating the global drug problem. In this regard, last month Canada was elected to the chairmanship of a working group within the Organization of American States Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission.

(*spoke in English*)

That group has been tasked by leaders in this hemisphere with developing a multilateral evaluation mechanism that will evaluate national and international anti-drug efforts. This work may serve as a useful example for the United Nations in efforts to develop a global evaluation mechanism.

Furthermore, our Finance Minister has committed himself to convening, this year, a group of Foreign Ministers from this hemisphere to discuss the impact of the drug problem. The Ministers can link the drug problem not only to transnational organized crime but also to other foreign policy issues such as its economic and social costs, the violence associated with drugs and their impact on human security, as well as discuss the appropriateness of supply and demand reduction strategies.

At this United Nations special session, Canada is pleased to be able to announce that we have increased our financial support to UNDCP by 25 per cent over the last two years. Canada will work closely with the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs and with UNDCP in the coming months to follow up on the commitments contained in the Political Declaration and the associated documents — on precursors, amphetamine-type stimulants, judicial cooperation, money-laundering, demand reduction and alternative development — that we will adopt today.

Finally, Canada wishes to offer its congratulations to the many countries and individuals whose vision and hard work have resulted in these documents. We welcome the leadership and coordinating role of UNDCP in implementing these undertakings. Canada strongly supports the principle of shared responsibility and the process of working together to evaluate and address drug problems with our global, bilateral and multilateral partners. I am confident that this special session has generated the international momentum which will provide the basis on which we can all address, with renewed vigour and capacity, the serious threat of illicit drugs.

The President: I thank the Solicitor-General of Canada for his statement.

I give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Charles Margai, Minister for Internal Affairs and Local Administration of Sierra Leone.

Mr. Margai (Sierra Leone): I shall preface my address by extending, on behalf of my President and of the Government and the people of Sierra Leone, my condolences to General Abdulsalam Abubakar, head of State of Nigeria, as well as to the Government and the people of that sister Republic, on the sudden demise of General Sani Abacha, his predecessor, an illustrious son of the soil of Africa and a great contributor to the maintenance of international peace and stability, as exemplified by his uncompromising stance in the restoration of democracy to Sierra Leone. This irreparable loss will be mourned by all. May his soul rest in perfect peace.

I bring you greetings, Mr. President, from President Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah and from the Government and the people of Sierra Leone.

It is gratifying to see us assembled here today, united in spirit, effort and determination, to address the perennial problem of drug abuse, which, if not contained, may have devastating social consequences for our various societies.

Like many other countries, Sierra Leone is experiencing acute problems associated with the illicit production, consumption and trafficking of dangerous drugs. This session, therefore, could not have been convened at a more appropriate time, as we approach the next millennium with a concerted and determined effort to rid the world of dangerous drugs.

The consumption and trafficking in Sierra Leone of the plant *Cannabis sativa*, although introduced by the former Government of the All People's Congress, assumed alarming proportions with the emergence of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), the senseless rebel war and subsequent junta misrule by the National Provisional Ruling Council and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC).

According to information supplied by the Drug Enforcement Unit of the Central Investigations Department, there has been a tenfold increase in the number of arrests associated with the possession and trafficking of *Cannabis sativa*. In 1996 and 1997, a total of 563 kilograms of herbal cannabis was seized at Lungi international airport. This is a clear indication that the drug is not only consumed in the country, but trafficked across its borders.

Prior to the inception of the RUF rebel war in 1991, the cultivation of *Cannabis sativa* was restricted to the northern and western areas of Sierra Leone. The rebel incursion and the two aforementioned military regimes encouraged widespread cultivation and abuse of dangerous drugs country-wide. Energetic young farmers who were once engaged in rice farming — rice is the country's staple food — and the cultivation of other cash crops, have now diverted their attention to the cultivation of cannabis in a bid to quickly enrich themselves.

The traditional methods of trafficking drugs — in commercial cargoes, luggage, body cavities and so forth — remain the most common. Illicit trafficking by sea is posing a major concern, particularly when small unregistered and unseaworthy vessels are involved in such coastal exercises, as well as in transshipments of consignments from larger vessels. This method of trafficking is made easier because of Sierra Leone's expansive coastal areas and numerous rivers, which are penetrable, and therefore susceptible to serving as entry points.

It is indeed disheartening to note that those who suffered most during the seven-year rebel war and subsequent misrule in my country by the junta were children forcibly conscripted as soldiers by the AFRC/RUF junta. This is an issue needing urgent international attention, through carefully formulated and coordinated programmes. The attendant consequences of the events flowing from the rebel incursion and the junta misrule are a clear manifestation of how drug abuse can undermine democracy and the socio-economic fabric of society.

The anti-narcotics squad of the Criminal Investigation Department is the main organ responsible for the enforcement of drug laws in Sierra Leone. Apart from its role in supply reduction, the squad collaborates with other agencies, such as the Pharmacy Board, non-governmental organizations, youth groups and the Ministry of Education, to enhance demand reduction campaigns. Before the junta interruption, the Government adopted new measures to cope with the challenges posed by drug abuse and illicit trafficking at the national level. Centralized inter-ministerial coordinating bodies comprising personnel from different agencies were established to galvanize resources and improve coordination between law-enforcement agencies, particularly customs, the police and the judiciary, to achieve greater complementarity between drug law-enforcement agencies responsible for demand reduction campaigns. Notwithstanding these measures, there is an urgent need for the establishment of a drug enforcement agency with international support, particularly in the form of equipment, training and finance.

Mindful of the fact that drug abuse is a crime that permeates international borders, the Government of Sierra Leone has introduced legislation to deal with the problem, such as the Dangerous Drugs Act of 1960 and the Pharmacy and Drugs Act of 1988, which introduced stiffer penalties. The Government is determined to relentlessly pursue the fight against drug abuse and has in consequence ratified all United Nations conventions relative thereto.

Technical assistance is therefore required from UNDCP and other international agencies to help harmonize our national legislation with these conventions, especially the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, to enable

us to tackle international crimes associated with drug-trafficking or money-laundering. Furthermore, UNDCP and other agencies should encourage third world countries to enter into bilateral agreements with Member States in the area of the trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, and to address the question of extradition.

An urgent appeal is therefore made by the Government of Sierra Leone to UNDCP, all Member States and institutions possessing technical skills, logistics and financial means to assist it to participate fully in this concerted global war to combat the trafficking and abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, which has been accentuated by the effect of seven years of rebel war and junta misrule that have totally destroyed the fabric of our society.

Permit me to take this opportunity on behalf of the President, the Government and the people of Sierra Leone, to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the United Nations, the Secretary-General, Member States and other international organizations for the unwavering support given to us in our quest for the restoration of democracy and constitutional order in our country.

The President: I thank the Minister for Internal Affairs and Local Administration of Sierra Leone for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Chitalu Sampa, Minister of Defence of Zambia.

Mr. Sampa (Zambia): Marking the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances gives us an opportunity to assess our successes and identify the challenges we need to overcome in order for us to make serious headway towards a drug-free world. This, we believe, is an achievable goal. But we must all galvanize the political will to undertake the necessary action.

The implementation of the Declaration will require a comprehensive approach. It is the considered view of my delegation that the problem of drugs is a development matter which needs to be an integral part of all development policies. The reality of the world we live in today is that it would be unrealistic to try to deal with the world drug problem in isolation. It is also unproductive to engage in finger-pointing. It is a well-established fact that organized criminal groups, particularly the drug lords and their illegal families, the cartels, are spreading their operations around the world.

We, the developing countries, have become their prime targets, especially in relation to their money-laundering activities. We are undertaking serious efforts to restructure our economies and are making every effort to attract much-needed private investment. In our genuine need to open up our economies, we may unwittingly have exposed ourselves to the evils of international crime, particularly money-laundering, because of our weak institutions and the fact that our justice systems are not yet sufficiently developed to prevent and control organized transnational crime.

The framework for international cooperation in combating the drug problem must therefore be widened to ensure assistance to Governments in drafting and implementing national drug-control laws and regulations. These should include training for law-enforcement personnel, judges, magistrates and prosecutors, as well as the provision of necessary technical expertise and equipment.

It is an indisputable fact that reducing the demand for drugs is key to solving the global drug problem. There is certainly a need for stronger demand reduction efforts that are community-based and include a wide umbrella of actors: parents, teachers and churches all need to get involved. The demand reduction programmes should cover all areas of prevention, from discouraging initial use to reducing the negative health and social consequences of drug abuse.

We also see an urgent need to focus demand reduction strategies on young people, who in our view need special attention. These programmes should be age-appropriate, relevant and accessible to these groups, which are most at risk, and they should as a matter of course take into account the different socio-economic factors.

Social deprivation and poverty in most parts of the world are breeding grounds for drug abuse. The sense of helplessness and isolation due to unfavourable social and economic factors makes people -- especially young people — more vulnerable to drug abuse and drug-related risk-taking behaviour. These unfortunate people are also open to exploitation by drug lords.

I would like to take this opportunity to share with members the situation in Zambia in relation to the drug problem. Zambia has been used as a transit port for drugs coming from the Far East. It has unfortunately emerged as an important distribution point for illicit narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. The geopolitical position of Zambia in the southern African region, and particularly the centrality of the Lusaka international airport, makes Zambia easily accessible to all of its neighbours both by air and by road networks.

The tragic result of this interaction is that today drug abuse, which was virtually unheard of in Zambia, is on the rise. A worrying percentage of our youth have become victims of drug and substance abuse. This new trend is also linked to the social and economic difficulties that the country is going through. In addition, some of our youth have been the victims of drug barons, who have recruited them as couriers. It is actually this exposure that has led to the consumption of drugs.

It is a declared policy of the Zambian Government to fight the scourge of drugs with utmost vigour through the work of its Drug Enforcement Commission. Our long-term strategy is aimed at preventing the use of drugs. We have identified the need to raise awareness of the dangers of drug abuse at the community level, especially in schools and colleges. Our experience has shown that community-wide participation and a partnership approach are crucial to the success of the programme. Collaboration among Government, non-governmental organizations, teachers, employers and the private sector is also essential. But it is of utmost importance that family responsibility be stressed. Parents and a stable family environment are indispensable in the war against drugs.

In addition to formulating a national drug control master plan which is in accordance with the United Nations Global Programme of Action, Zambia has already undertaken very specific measures to curb drug trafficking. First, we have ratified all United Nations conventions which deal with issues of the control of illicit narcotic drugs, including the 1988 United Nations Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

Secondly, we enacted the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act No. 37 of 1993, whose provisions comply with the 1988 Convention. Stiffer penalties are prescribed under this law, in which trafficking in narcotic drugs carries a penalty of 25 years; there is no bail for drug offences under that act.

Thirdly, all drug offences are extraditable offences.

Fourthly, a drug enforcement officer or a police officer who commits a narcotic drug offence automatically receives twice the prescribed penalty. This is to ensure that our officers stay above board in drug interdiction efforts.

Fifthly, Zambia is currently preparing documentation for the ratification of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) protocol on cross-border trafficking within the subregion. This process will be completed before the summit of heads of State of SADC countries later this year.

Finally, my Government is also taking measures to fight the emerging incidences of money-laundering. An anti-money-laundering bill will be presented to the National Assembly for enactment into law when parliamentary business resumes in July this year. The Zambian Government fully supports the initiative taken by the United Nations with the global programme against money-laundering for 1997 to 1999, and we stand ready to participate in that programme.

On the emerging debate on whether or not to legalize the use of cannabis and other substances that are termed "soft" drugs, the position of the Zambian Government is that we are against legalizing cannabis or any other so-called soft drug, and will continue to prescribe stringent measures to deal with those who break the law on the prohibition of cannabis trafficking, possession or smoking. The Zambian position on this matter will remain consistent with the decision taken by the heads of national drug law enforcement agencies of Africa in April 1998 in Abuja, Nigeria, and the African position adopted in Nairobi, Kenya, which rejected arguments for the legalization of cannabis in Africa. We shall also support the southern region drug control programme approved by regional law enforcement experts meeting in Botswana early this year.

No one, and certainly no country, is immune to the devastating consequences of drug abuse and illicit trafficking. As we enter the twenty-first century, let all of us gathered here today resolve to truly commit our Governments to implement the strategies set out in the draft declaration before us. We can make a difference.

The President: I thank the Minister of Defence of Zambia for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Hussein Ali Haithem, Vice-Minister, Ministry of the Interior of Yemen.

Mr. Haithem (Yemen) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The delegation of Yemen is grateful to you, Sir, for your efforts in convening this special session to spur international cooperation in combating drugs. This session represents a turning point in bolstering and developing international relations with a view to confronting this frightening phenomenon, which is a source of fear and anxiety in every home and family in the world. The drugs problem is not a regional problem or a problem for any single country or people; it is a world-wide problem that persists, and that in a sense moves in step with each country's development and progress.

Hence, no State can be spared this dangerous epidemic. For example, in my country, the Yemen Arab Republic, we had few such problems before 1935. But, like every other country in the world, we are now the victim of drug problems. Now, traffickers frequently use our country as a transit point, which adds to the gravity of the situation. But in spite of its limited means, our country has been able to frustrate many attempts to transfer drugs through Yemen to other countries. As we know, drugs may be grown in one country, manufactured in another and transferred through a third, for consumption in yet another country.

No State, however wealthy, can hope to eliminate this phenomenon alone, which is why it is so critical to spur international cooperation in this field. My Government, which has ratified international conventions on combating drugs and psychotropic substances, has worked vigorously to bolster these agreements, within a legal framework. We have adopted a law on fighting narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, which covers all illicit contacts relating to drugs and psychotropic substances, and which provides for penalties commensurate with the crimes specified in that law. Its annexes cover all illicit drugs, as designated on international lists.

On the technical side, we organize training courses for personnel working in this area. These courses take place both within Yemen and outside it. This reflects my country's interest in consolidating international cooperation and the ability to take action in this sphere.

We view this historic special session also as a starting point: a springboard in the struggle against drugs. We urgently appeal to all countries and to all international organizations involved in combating drugs to close ranks and support countries, including my own, that lack the technical and material means to wage the struggle. Let us form a single front against the amoral gangs that lack human values and that have created this scourge.

This is a grave, multi-faceted and multilateral problem indeed, but we have the firm hope that we will leave this world forum having adopted practical programmes to eliminate this scourge world-wide.

The President: I thank the Vice-Minister, Ministry of the Interior of Yemen for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Maurice Randrianame, Director-General in charge of the Interministerial Campaign against Drugs of Madagascar.

Mr. Randrianame (Madagascar) (*interpretation from French*): The delegation of Madagascar welcomes the convening of this special session of the General Assembly, which is fresh proof of the determination of the international community to combat the many-faceted problem of drugs. This session coincides with the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988, and provides a new opportunity to adopt innovative approaches that can meet both current challenges and those of the next millennium.

The scourge of the illicit traffic in drugs has become a global problem, and it can be eliminated only through international cooperation based on partnership and active solidarity. Accordingly, the Government of Madagascar wishes to pay tribute to the efforts of the United Nations carried out through its specialized agencies, including the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), and hopes that this special session will give fresh momentum to translating global strategies and policies into concrete action at the national, regional and international levels.

My Government welcomes this session also because it will reaffirm, in the draft political declaration before it, the determination of the international community — previously expressed at the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, held at Vienna in June 1987, and at the seventeenth special session of the General Assembly, held at New York in February 1990 — vigorously to combat drug abuse, illicit drug trafficking and related activities, including money-laundering and corruption. This combat will be waged

individually at the national level, and in cooperation with other States at the regional and international levels, on the basis of shared responsibility. Indeed, there is no longer any distinction between producer countries and consumer countries: both are affected by the same problems. All States must therefore accede to the relevant legal instruments, which provide an ideal framework for cooperation.

Mindful that any effort to combat drugs will be condemned to failure without a sound organizational structure and a solid, appropriate legal environment, and faithful to its commitments, Madagascar has participated in international conferences and has maintained and strengthened its Interministerial Campaign against Drugs, which is responsible, *inter alia*, for coordinating anti-drug activities by governmental and non-governmental bodies, in a spirit of synergy and effectiveness. We have promoted cooperation with other countries and regional and international organizations.

Madagascar has harmonized its national legislation with the spirit and letter of the international conventions in force, by promulgating on 4 December 1997 a law on the control of narcotics, psychotropic substances and precursors; this was carried out with legal assistance from the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP). This legislation was necessary to clamp down on the illicit traffic in drugs other than cannabis, which are beginning to make inroads in Madagascar. The law also enables us to prosecute those who in any way encourage others to consume controlled substances. Its therapeutic provisions permit the judge to substitute treatment for incarceration. Finally, the law makes it possible to place under control substances not under international controls that nonetheless pose a threat to individuals and society — such as *Catha edulis*, whose synthetic derivatives cathine and cathinone are, oddly enough, covered.

Since 1996, my Government has been engaged in talks with Council of Europe with a view to acceding to European convention on judicial cooperation, and the Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime. We recently requested the UNDCP to provide legal assistance in drafting a law on money-laundering. A similar initiative has been taken with respect to the Universal Postal Union on holding a training seminar for postal, customs and law enforcement agents, in view of the possible use of the postal service by traffickers.

In tandem with the adoption of the new legislation, and based on the framework drafted by the UNDCP, Madagascar has begun to prepare a national anti-drug plan focused principally on demand reduction. To that end, an epidemiological survey has been carried out with the assistance of the Institute for Training and Drug Control and of INSEM in Paris, to identify the real trends in drug abuse and, indirectly, in illicit trafficking as well as to identify the best target group for a prevention programme for young people.

One of the plan's objectives is the elimination of illicit cannabis crops. Operations carried out by our national police since June 1997 in the northern part of Madagascar, which is known to be one of the areas in which illicit crops are grown, discovered large illicit crops of cannabis extending over several dozens of hectares. The police destroyed scores of tons of cannabis and arrested hundreds of farmers involved in growing and production. This should be extended to other parts of the country, but that requires major financial resources. The regional representative of the UNDCP at Nairobi, Kenya, has been informed of this. These operations have definitely enabled us to remove from the illicit market large quantities of cannabis which would have done great harm to users.

Yet, without in any way condoning these illicit practices, I must note that families whose living conditions already leave much to be desired will suffer from this because of the loss of earnings that these operations entail. Pursuant to the principles of the humanistic and environmentally friendly republic we have established in Madagascar, about which our President spoke at length at his inauguration before the supreme court, our Government's major concern, with a view to reconciling individuals with their brethren — for, according to Hobbes in his *De Cive*, "Man to Man is an arrant Wolfe", "*homo homini lupus*," and, according to Jean-Jacques Rousseau in *Du Contrat social*, man is born good but society corrupts him — and with their environment, is the eradication of poverty. It is a fact that poor people are often prompted to commit reprehensible acts, even crimes, that in normal circumstances their conscience would condemn.

With this concern in mind, Madagascar's national anti-drug plan stresses, in the framework of integrated rural development, a programme of replacing illicit crops with other viable, profitable crops. But this programme requires considerable human and financial resources, for it is not enough to raise a crop: the substitute crop must

find its way from the farm to the market. This requires reliable, well-built roads that will make year-round transportation feasible.

The measures that Madagascar plans to implement at the national, regional and international levels in the context of its commitment to the fight against the scourge of drugs require human and financial resources that we hope to find through other States and through international governmental and non-governmental organizations — if the international cooperation in eradicating this scourge, of which we are constantly speaking here, is not an empty phrase. That cooperation must also include condemnation by the international community of all lax policies adopted by certain States, including the liberalization and decriminalization of any activity related to cannabis, and the distribution of drugs to addicts for any reason. Such policies could weaken the entire international anti-drug system and could consequently impede the cooperation for which that system is the only suitable framework.

The President: I thank the Director-General in charge of the Interministerial Campaign against Drugs of Madagascar for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Baboucarr-Blaise Jagne, chairman of the delegation of the Gambia.

Mr. Jagne (Gambia): Let me at the outset, on behalf of the Gambian delegation, convey our heartfelt condolences to the delegation of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on the untimely demise of the former head of State, General Sani Abacha. General Abacha contributed immensely to strengthening the excellent relations that have always existed between the sister republics of Nigeria and the Gambia. He also did a great deal to give concrete expression to the lofty ideals of pan-Africanism and, indeed, African solidarity and brotherhood. May his soul rest in perfect peace.

There could not have been a better forum in which to address the world drug problem than this special session. It is our fervent hope that through sustained, concerted international effort, our common goal of a drug-free world can be achieved. There is no need to emphasize the fact that the drug menace has already assumed monumental proportions, to such an extent that today no society is safe from its lethal and tenacious tentacles. Quite apart from the violence associated with drugs, the very fabric of society itself is destroyed in the process, and the most precious asset of any nation, young people, are always, unfortunately, the first victims. As the young are the future of all nations, we all have a vested interest in protecting them. It should therefore be our common resolve to deal a death-blow to the drug problem in all its forms.

The first step in this regard is the adoption of the draft political declaration, which is also, in a way, our mission statement. We are confident that, with determination, the necessary political will and adequate resources, the job can be done in the long run, the dimensions of the challenge notwithstanding.

Let me take my own country as an example. We all know that many countries here present have been used as transit points by drug traffickers in their extensive networks. The Gambia was no exception to the rule, but since the advent of the new Government in July 1994 under the leadership of His Excellency President Yahya A. J. J. Jammeh and since his immediate declaration of war on drugs, the problem has been drastically reduced. The National Drug Squad established in 1991 has stepped up its activities, including airport and seaport reinforcement exercises, monitoring and information gathering, screening of suspects, identification, raids, arrests and conviction of pushers, dealers and traffickers. We could have done better with more resources but, all the same, we are hopeful that with the momentum generated by this special session we can count on the assistance and cooperation of other countries to help us with logistics, including training, and material support.

At this juncture, allow me to express my delegation's sincere appreciation of the timely offer made by President Clinton concerning the establishment of a fellowship programme that would enable officials from other countries to come to the United States for further training in the fight against drugs.

In addition to the Drug Squad mentioned earlier, a National Drug Control Programme has also been established in the Gambia, with two main objectives envisaged, namely to control the menace of drug trafficking and its associated problems and, secondly, to strengthen the existing institutions associated with the treatment of drug addicts. An integral part of our National Drug Control Programme is its drug control laboratory, where samples of seizures are analyzed. It was with the active support of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) that the laboratory was set up primarily for the quality control of pharmaceuticals. But because of an acute shortage of

resources, we are compelled to try to kill two birds with one stone. My country is therefore most grateful to the UNDCP for their cooperation.

Nor must we forget the invaluable contribution of a number of non-governmental organizations. I am in our case referring to a local organization, the Youth Front Against Drugs and Alcohol, which has been working very hard not only to get young people away from drugs, but also to open more attractive outlets for them.

In conclusion, I would like, on behalf of my Government, to thank President Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico for the initiative taken to convene this special session devoted to the world drug problem. President Jammeh himself would have liked to attend this important meeting in person, but due to the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity currently taking place in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, he could not come. Nonetheless, he will continue to follow this matter closely with undiminished interest and give the necessary directives to all those who are concerned with the fight against drugs in the Gambia for a coordinated and vigorous follow-up.

This special session will no doubt rekindle the interest that we all share in the fight against drugs. We all crave a drug-free world. It is a daunting task, to say the least, but we must take up the challenge because the stakes are so high that we cannot afford to be complacent.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of the Gambia for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Percy Metsing Mangoaela, Chairman of the delegation of Lesotho.

Mr. Mangoaela (Lesotho): It is a singular honour for me to address this twentieth special session of the General Assembly, on behalf of the recently elected Government of Lesotho, on a problem whose enormity is not in dispute. The problem of drug abuse and attendant social consequences poses a severe challenge to the resourcefulness of humankind to respond collectively to a common menace.

A sound and comprehensive framework for drug control activities was established in the existing international drug control treaties. The United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) has been coordinating all drug control activities within the United Nations system and has also been providing effective leadership in promoting international cooperation in drug control. The International Narcotics Control Board has been engaged in relentless efforts with Member States to ensure the comprehensive implementation of the provisions of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988.

Some major events have taken place, including the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, held in Vienna in June 1987, and the seventeenth special session of the General Assembly, held in 1990, which was devoted to international drug control issues and at which the Assembly adopted a Political Declaration and Global Programme of Action. The Assembly also proclaimed the 10-year period from 1991 to 2000 as the United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse.

Despite all these efforts and others aimed at drug control, all countries are now affected by the devastating consequences of drug abuse. In fact, the drug problem has bypassed national borders and has become a global threat. The drug scourge has become increasingly complex. The efforts of the international community to combat the escalating problem are undermined by the production of new drugs. The illicit use of and traffic in drugs continue to pose a serious threat to the health and welfare of our peoples and they also adversely affect the economic, cultural and political foundations of our societies. Profits made from illicit trafficking are being used to destabilize Governments, corrupt officials and influence Government decisions.

Lesotho is a party to the existing treaties on drug control, namely, the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988. At this special session, the Government of Lesotho wishes to renew its commitment to give effect to the provisions of those Conventions. We also reaffirm our commitment to achieve concrete results on all the objectives set out by the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

The Government of Lesotho is concerned that, in all parts of the world, those who are mainly affected by the drug problem are children and youth. The age of initiation into drug abuse is falling almost every year. Article 33 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child,

to which 191 States are parties, emphasizes the need to protect children from abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. Hence, at this special session, which marks the tenth anniversary of the 1988 Convention, my delegation reiterates that the participation of all nations, communities and families is essential if we are to successfully protect our children and win the fight against drugs.

It is disturbing to note that the extended family, which occupies a central position in African societies, is rapidly disintegrating due to factors such as poverty, drought, civil war and political and ethnic conflicts, which, in turn, lead to famine and massive displacement of populations. Unfortunately, the erosion of the African family structure has led to the drift towards drug abuse, especially among children and young people. We therefore call upon all members of the international community to address the problem of drugs in Africa, taking into account factors that contribute to the disintegration of the African family.

In this context, my delegation wishes to stress the importance of the participation of families in any given society in the fight against drugs. Families are the principal means for the transmission of values, culture, attitudes and patterns of behaviour. It is usually young people in especially difficult circumstances, such as street children, who are particularly vulnerable to drug abuse and drug-related risk-taking behaviour. We recall that the General Assembly, in its resolution 47/237 of 20 September 1993, proclaimed 15 May as the International Day of Families. We are convinced that the international community, by annual observance of this day, attaches great importance to families as basic units of society. However, we would still like to see the importance of the participation of families in the fight against drugs being highlighted at this session.

My delegation is very pleased that representatives from 130 Governments who attended the final preparatory session, which was held in Vienna from 16 to 21 March 1998, agreed to the Political Declaration proposed for adoption at this special session. The Declaration sets out a comprehensive global strategy designed to tackle simultaneously all aspects of the drug problem. It is also very important that target dates have been set. Lesotho also welcomes the provisions set out in the "Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction", "Measures to promote judicial cooperation" and "Countering money-laundering".

My delegation cannot overemphasize the importance of the principle of shared responsibility for addressing the demand and supply aspects of drug-trafficking. We would therefore welcome an assessment of the international drug problem and the development of a forward-looking strategy for the twenty-first century centred on the basic principle of a balanced approach between supply and demand reduction and, in particular, with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, and non-intervention in internal affairs of States.

In Lesotho, although we cannot claim not to be affected by the scourge of drugs, we do not know the extent of drug abuse and trafficking in the country. What we do know is that cannabis is produced in the country, albeit in small quantities. It grows in the mountain regions with difficult road access. Most of the producers are the poorest of the rural poor. They often export their produce to neighbouring South Africa in order to earn money for their sustenance and their other economic needs. These people, who feed their families from the proceeds of their illegal produce, who get arrested by the police and serve long sentences in prison or who get mugged by criminals, are not criminals themselves. They are heads of families faced with abject poverty. We therefore agree that alternative development is the answer to these intractable problems.

Of equal concern to my Government is the link between illicit traffic in drugs and organized crime. The illicit drug trade is associated with illicit traffic in arms and with money-laundering. The Government of Lesotho has realized the prevalence of corruption in the country. Research undertaken with the assistance of the Danish Centre for Human Rights and the Governments of Botswana, South Africa and the United Kingdom has shown the incidence of economic crime to be on the increase in the country and to involve senior officials in the civil service and other Government institutions. The Government has also recognized that its control strategies cannot succeed without legislation against money-laundering, and is thus in the process of enacting such legislation. My delegation believes that the drug problem can be effectively dealt with only through international cooperation. We are therefore appreciative of the cooperation we have received from some of our neighbours, such as Botswana and South Africa, as well as from those farther afield, such as Denmark and the United Kingdom.

Finally, the Government of Lesotho wishes to express its appreciation for the contribution made by

UNDCP in the subregion. UNDCP has been involved in raising awareness and strengthening law enforcement to halt the flow of illegal drugs across national borders in the subregion. Just last month it funded a regional conference in Nairobi, Kenya, in which officials from 15 southern and eastern African countries participated. UNDCP's efforts are complementary to the initiatives taken by the Southern African Development Community (SADC), of which Lesotho is a member, to combat drug-trafficking within the Community. In this regard, SADC has adopted a Protocol on combating illicit drugs.

The challenge posed by the drug abuse problem is not for the faint-hearted, and the international community, when it decides to act in concert, has never been known to be faint-hearted. Such conviction underpins our faith in our collective capacity to rise to the challenge.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of Lesotho for his statement.

I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. William Bull, Chairman of the delegation of Liberia.

Mr. Bull (Liberia): Permit me at the outset, on behalf of my Government, to reiterate our heartfelt condolences to the Government and the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on the passing of General Sani Abacha. He was an outstanding son of Africa, and his passing is a tremendous loss to the subregion.

The Government of Liberia welcomes the convening of this twentieth special session of the General Assembly devoted to the world drug problem.

It is to be regretted that over the years the appeals from this rostrum and other international forums for concerted international action to address the drug problem have not received the support they deserve. Yet our participation in this session reflects a growing awareness of the complexity of the problem and the need to take global action to combat the illicit drug scourge, which is having a detrimental impact on millions of lives throughout our world.

A comprehensive approach to the drug problem must address both the demand and supply of drugs and the impact it has had on the socio-economic development and infrastructure of countries, particularly those of the developing world.

In this regard, our universal Organization is the best forum to sensitize people and help formulate measures to address the world drug problem. We pay a deserved tribute to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his leadership and consistent efforts to focus attention on the urgent need for decisive action to reverse the present trend. We acknowledge the very important contributions of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), under the capable leadership of Mr. Arlacchi, in helping mobilize international action and assistance to combat the drug problem.

In Africa, there is a growing recognition of the need to arrest the problems of drug abuse in order to prevent the diversion of scarce resources from socio-economic development to law enforcement and other measures to combat drug-trafficking. Thus, various forums, at both the regional and subregional levels, have been making concerted efforts at drug control. The plan of action of the Organization of African Unity, adopted in July 1996 by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, established guidelines to ensure coherence of action in drug control at the national and regional levels. Many of the countries have also entered into bilateral and multilateral cooperation agreements aimed at drug contr...

At the subregional level, the member States of the Economic Community of West African States have worked together since 1993 to implement a unified drug control programme aimed at the eradication of illicit drugs from their countries.

In the case of Liberia, which experienced seven years of war until last July, when democratic elections were held, the incidence of drug abuse had reached alarming proportions. In 1995, the then interim Administration established an Inter-Ministerial Drug Committee headed by an Executive Director. The Committee sought for the first time to formulate national programmes and policies for the prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of drug users. It also sought to harmonize policies with other countries in the subregion to stem drug-trafficking.

Upon taking office in August 1997, President Charles Taylor, in his first nationwide address, stressed his Government's determination to combat trafficking in illicit drugs and to prevent drug traffickers from using Liberian territory as a safe haven.

In collaboration with UNDCP, friendly Governments and other groups, the Liberian authorities have developed a two-year recovery plan, estimated to cost $2 million, aimed at anti-drug sensitization of the population. This includes institutional capacity-building through training, seminars, mass media education, and radio and television programmes, among other things.

A strategy for the rehabilitation of ex-combatants who are drug addicts has been designed by the Government. The estimated cost for the implementation of this programme over a three-year period is $3 million.

It is clear that in spite of the modest efforts of Liberia and other like-minded countries to institute national programmes and policies to combat illicit drug-trafficking and drug abuse, only concerted international action can reverse this trend. This is why my Government fully endorses the time-specific declarations and programmes which will be adopted at this special session.

In this connection, it is imperative that adequate support be given to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and to countries such as Liberia, which lack the resources to fully implement national programmes aimed at combating the drug problem.

The Government of Liberia is committed to the global strategy to comprehensively address the drug problem confronting our world. It is our hope that the decisions reached here will send a clear message of the resolve of the international community to bring an end to this menace facing mankind.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of Liberia for his statement.

I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Vladimir Galuška, Chairman of the delegation of the Czech Republic.

Mr. Galuška (Czech Republic): I do not think that anyone will be surprised when I start by saying that now, near the end of the twentieth century, drugs are one of the major problems of our planet. They affect political institutions as well as the social welfare, health and security of populations in virtually all countries of the world. This supranational phenomenon, which transcends the boundaries of States, regions and geopolitical areas, is a typical global issue that can be addressed only by sustained international cooperation. The Czech Republic is convinced that the necessary prerequisite for an effective anti-drug action, on the domestic and international level, is the political will of each State concerned. The ratification and implementation of the three international drug control Conventions of 1961, 1971 and 1988 is an indispensable precondition for an effective fight against drugs.

For the Czech Republic, the main purpose of this special session is to strengthen those Conventions, which the international community considers to be basic legal instruments, by adopting the recommendations contained in the report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (A/S-20/4). The draft Political Declaration, reflecting the world community's awareness of the variety of drug problems, strengthens its effort to reach concrete targets and for the first time in history sets the dates for implementation.

The Czech Republic greatly appreciates the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction. We fully agree with the idea that demand reduction programmes must cover all preventive measures — those intended to deter young people from using drugs as well as those designed to minimize the damaging health and social impact of drug abuse. The Czech Republic considers that the texts prepared for this session offer a good basis for enhanced international cooperation and believes that we will soon reach a consensus on their adoption.

Not to dwell on formal proclamations, I will now cite several examples of the Czech Republic's resolve to confront the growing drug problem. This February, the Government approved a new anti-drug strategy for the years 1998-2000, introducing an integrated and balanced approach that is in keeping with the Action Programme adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. A balanced approach to demand and supply reduction is the key to effective drug control. This strategy is applied at two basic levels: the central level and the local community level. This decentralized system delegates responsibility to district anti-drug coordinators. Our experience has shown that involvement of the local community in drug control projects is of vital importance.

Over the last three years, the Czech Republic has introduced many laws which are fully consistent with the relevant United Nations conventions and the European Union *acquis*. The most important ones are: the law against money-laundering; the amendment to the criminal code declaring possession of drugs for personal use a

criminal act; and a law regulating verification of the legitimate end-use of narcotic and psychotropic substances, including precursors. The main thrust of the Czech Republic's anti-drug strategy is to broaden and strengthen existing cooperation at the subregional and regional level. In this process we appreciate the role of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), which remains the main coordinating body for the efforts of the world community in the implementation of its far-reaching goals.

It is not necessary to graduate with a degree in economics to notice that in today's world, drugs also represent an economic problem. It is alarming that the international drug trade now accounts for up to 5 per cent of world trade, and that the profits from organized crime have reached hundreds of millions of United States dollars. The overall price which the world's population has to pay is overwhelming and perhaps disproportionate to the energy invested in drug-control action. It is alarming also that the AIDS epidemic, spreading within the community of drug addicts, has grown into a major public-health risk which already has had, or in the near future will have, a ruinous effect on national budgets.

Drugs are clearly a chronic problem of the modern world. Some say that the underlying cause is the new social context, or the specific biological and psychological inclination of drug addicts. However, with realistic goals and a balanced, coordinated approach, there is hope that we will bring this growing problem under control. Sustained international cooperation is necessary, as no country will be able to overcome this problem alone. I think that this session is not only an exceptional opportunity to reaffirm our determination to honour international drug control commitments but also a chance for the international community to take at least a small step towards solving this major problem.

Let me conclude by saying that the tasks we are facing are difficult but clearly and realistically stated. It is now up to Member States as to whether, to what extent, and how quickly we will accomplish them. Clearly, the results of our joint effort will shape the face of the world on the threshold of the next millennium.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of the Czech Republic for his statement.

I now give the floor to Mr. Mohammed Al-Sameen, Chargé d'affaires of Oman.

Mr. Al-Sameen (Oman) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I should like first of all to express to you, Sir, on behalf of the delegation of my country, our warm thanks for your excellent organization of the work of this session. I should like also to express my appreciation for the work of the Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) for the successful preparation of the work of the session.

The General Assembly has convened at this special session to consider an issue of great importance to the international community. This international manifestation and consideration of the drug problem and the problem of illicit drug trafficking is yet further proof of the importance attached by the international community to eliminating this dangerous transnational scourge. It is certain that the scourge of drugs affects all peoples and that it is a catastrophe for societies.

Through the damage it inflicts on the development strategies of countries — not to speak of the resulting threats to international peace and security — international cooperation to face the threat of drugs and of illicit drug trafficking is an absolute necessity which imposes on us the need for coordinated efforts to achieve tangible results aimed at eliminating this problem in all its dimensions.

The international conventions and relevant resolutions adopted by the international community have greatly contributed to promoting efforts to fight this scourge. Now more than ever it is up to us to implement these conventions and promote them through mechanisms that can succeed.

My country hails the international efforts to combat drugs and all related activities. My country would also like to state once again its firm commitment to joint cooperation to eradicate this phenomenon. This is because we are fully aware of the danger of drugs and their negative impact on the health and prosperity of humanity throughout the world. My country's Government is convinced of the importance of promoting international efforts in this framework. We have therefore participated with the international community in the elaboration of effective solutions to remedy the problems of drug abuse and illicit drug traffic. Consequently, my country has worked to promulgate strict national laws to address this phenomenon and contain it. In addition, my country's Government has established a specialized body to combat drugs, carry out training, and, develop and

promote scientific research efforts and studies aimed at addressing and resolving this problem.

We wish to reiterate the importance of the role of international action in combating drugs. Therefore we stress the importance of shared responsibility, which should be applied on a firm and integrated basis, keeping in view the principle of respect of national sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries and of non-interference in their affairs. On this basis my country has acceded to all the international conventions and protocols on the fight against drugs. Furthermore there is joint cooperation among all of our national agencies and bodies and the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) in this context.

On the regional level, my country has participated in the elaboration of the draft of the unified law on drug crimes of the Gulf Cooperation Council. My country also participated in the formulation of the Arab strategy to fight drug abuse. In addition, it has also cooperated with the Arab Office to Fight Narcotic Drugs of the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior.

Finally, my country is pleased with the recommendations of the preparatory body for the session. We would also like to reiterate the importance we attach to action in the context of a new partnership to apply the principle of shared responsibility and promote the legal framework. This is in addition to emphasizing the importance of coordinating efforts among countries to adopt legislation aiming at implementing an international strategy. These efforts will be insufficient unless they are harmonized with actions to reduce supply from the producer countries. This should be accompanied by energetic efforts to reduce the demand for drugs, including the so-called soft or sweet drugs.

We should also not overlook the need to forfeit the funds generated by illicit drug trafficking and to prevent money-laundering. We need a mechanism for the strengthening of cooperation among States through the exchange of information in the context of the anti-drug struggle.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of Oman for his statement.

Before I begin calling on Observers, I should like to thank the representatives of Yemen, the Gambia and the Czech Republic, whose statements did not exceed six minutes, for their compliance with the decision of the General Assembly that statements would be limited to seven minutes. Everyone knows how difficult it is to make a short statement.

I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Ruth Dreifuss, Federal Councillor and Vice-President of the Swiss Confederation.

Mrs. Dreifuss (Switzerland) (*interpretation from French*): By devoting its deliberations to the fight against the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, the General Assembly is echoing the concerns of the international community.

No society is today spared by drug abuse and the traffic in illicit drugs. A distinction between producer and consumer countries can no longer be made. Given this trend, the international community must assume a shared responsibility and adopt a common strategy. My country supports the efforts made in recent years by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme to strengthen international cooperation and to develop multidisciplinary strategies at the national level.

Switzerland has formulated and implemented an enhanced drug strategy because of 1980s phenomena such as the AIDS epidemic, an increase in the number of drug users, the marginalization and obvious desperation of drug addicts, and an increase in the use of drugs in public places and in drug-related crime. Given the magnitude of these problems and aware of the fact that there is no single solution to resolve them, the Government of Switzerland has opted for a pragmatic, coherent policy to reduce drug addiction and its negative consequences, and to combat organized crime. That policy consists of a global, multidisciplinary approach based on four principles that promote confidence and cooperation among all players: prevention, treatment, risk reduction and suppression.

The first principle is prevention, to which we attach a high priority, as does the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Demand Reduction. This initiative requires a long-term commitment to young people because they are increasingly confronted with the opportunity to use illicit drugs. Prevention activities are essential within all social structures - in the family, in schools, in the area of leisure and sports, and so on.

The second main principle is the treatment and social rehabilitation of dependent persons, where it is

essential to offer a broad range of care. It was to take into account particularly severe dependency cases that did not respond to other therapeutic methods that Switzerland, began in 1994 to carry out scientific studies involving the medical prescription of narcotics to severely dependent persons. These studies are just a very small component of the treatment measures that are used in my country. The prescription, under strict State control, of heroin, morphine and intravenous methadone, is but one element in a broader medical and social care programme.

I wish to repeat this loud and clear here: Switzerland is not moving towards drug liberalization — quite the contrary. Heroin remains a banned substance in Switzerland and can be prescribed only in specialized institutions, with special authorization from the Confederation.

These studies have elicited great and often very critical interest. Switzerland wants to act very openly and will make available the scientific results of these trials to all interested persons. Our country has received several foreign delegations and is happy to continue to provide information about its approach.

The results of these trials indicate that the medical prescription of narcotics makes it possible to treat severely dependent drug addicts who have already tried other forms of treatment without success. Their state of health and social situation have improved considerably. Criminal activity among these persons is decreasing sharply. However, withdrawal requires a relatively long period of time.

The prescription of heroin to severely dependent drug addicts within the framework of a well-developed health system, such as my county's, has proved to be an interesting possible complement to the various forms of drug dependence treatments. We stress that many conditions have to be fulfilled in order to ensure that this form of treatment does not do more harm than good.

The third basic principle involves risk-reduction and survival measures for drug-dependent persons during the active phase of their addiction to drugs in order to prevent their physical and psychological deterioration, or even their deaths. Needle-exchange programmes, for example, seek to reduce the risk of transmitting AIDS or hepatitis.

Finally, the fourth basic principle involves suppressing the illicit production, sale and consumption of drugs, as well as the money-laundering that stems from these activities. With regard to the police, the Confederation has strengthened its coordination and intelligence in recent years, at both the national and international levels. Accordingly, Switzerland set up this spring a specialized unit that serves as a communications centre on money-laundering. This is one of the direct consequences of the entry into force on 1 April of the new law on money-laundering.

Likewise, the Confederation has increased its efforts to control the production of psychotropic substances, precursors and essential chemicals. Switzerland, which is a major producer of chemicals, is aware of its responsibility. It is through the effective control of primary chemicals and a relentless struggle against money-laundering that Switzerland intends to reach an important stage in the fight against organized crime.

The drug policy of the Swiss Government was debated at length last autumn. In a vote on 28 September, the people of Switzerland rejected by an overwhelming majority of 70 per cent the proposals of those who championed a more traditional and narrower approach. This result gives a very strong democratic legitimacy to the Government's drug policy.

The success of any drug policy is measured by facts. Allow me, in conclusion, to recall briefly some encouraging signs that have emerged in Switzerland. The number of drug-related deaths has decreased steadily. The number of new cases of HIV and hepatitis infection has also decreased dramatically. The number of new hard-drug users in Switzerland is decreasing, and the number of regular drug users has remained stable since 1990. The average age of drug addicts is rising. Most drug addicts eventually succeed in breaking their dependency. Finally, illicit drug seizures doubled between 1995 and 1996, while confiscations of drug-related money quadrupled last year.

I should also like to reaffirm here Switzerland's solidarity with international efforts to combat drugs. My country recognizes the importance of international coordination in the area of drug addiction because illicit-drug related problems cannot be solved within a single country. International cooperation and coordination are essential. The three days that we have spent here together will make it possible for us to strengthen them.

The President: I thank the Federal Councillor and Vice-President of the Swiss Confederation for her statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Archbishop Javier Lozano Barragán, President of the Pontifical Council for Pastoral Assistance to Health Care Workers of the Holy See.

Archbishop Lozano Barragán (Holy See) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I bring the greetings of Pope John Paul II, who strongly supports our work in the struggle against drug abuse. The Holy See fully supports the fight against illegal drug traffic.

Some of the leading causes of drug use among young people and adults are the lack of clear, convincing motivations in life, the absence of values, the conviction that life is not worth living, a sense of loneliness and inability to communicate, the lack of a close relationship with God, the lack of strong human and spiritual principles, escapism in order to forget and an unsatisfying social structure based on a materialistic and destructive view of human needs. The pursuit of money takes possession of the hearts of many people, and by way of the drug trade turns them into traffickers in the freedom of their brothers and sisters. This pursuit becomes entangled with major economic and even political interests.

Drug abuse is totally incompatible with the basic principles of dignity and human coexistence. Those who traffic in drugs are merchants of death who assault mankind with the deceit of false freedoms and prospects for happiness in a nefarious form of commerce.

As for liberalization, it must be remembered that drugs are not overcome with drugs; drugs are an evil, and concessions should not be made to evils. Experience has shown that liberalization is not a solution, but a surrender. The distinction between hard and soft drugs leads into a blind alley. Drug addiction is not a question of drugs, but of what motivates an individual to take them.

To remedy this scourge, we suggest three courses: prevention, suppression and recovery. With respect to prevention, we must restore the human values of love and life, the only ones able to give full meaning to existence, especially when they are illuminated by religious faith. It is incumbent on public institutions to insist on a serious policy that aims to correct situations of personal and social disorder, among which the crisis of the family, unemployment among young people, housing problems, the lack of social and medical services and the shortcomings of the school system stand out as prime considerations. A serene conviction concerning the immortality of the soul, future resurrection and eternal responsibility for one's actions is the surest method for such prevention.

As for suppression, it is a necessary element, but not a sufficient one by itself. The international commercial and financial structure of the drug trade must be combated. A solid front must be created that is committed to denouncing and legally prosecuting the merchants of death and eliminating the networks of social and moral disintegration. The expansion of the market in addictive substances must be effectively checked. The interests of those speculating in this market must be brought to light. The instruments and mechanisms they employ must be identified so as to proceed to dismantle them in a coordinated and effective fashion.

I would like to quote Pope John Paul II, who said:

> "My fervent exhortation and admiration ... for the heads of Government and citizens [who] have endeavoured to combat the production, sale and abuse of drugs, perhaps paying a very high price, even sacrificing their physical integrity ... I invite civil authorities, those with economic decision-making power and everyone with social responsibilities to continue and intensify their efforts to perfect legislation at all levels for the fight against the different kinds of drug addiction and to oppose all the forms of the drug culture and of drug traffic."

As regards recovery, it is necessary to know the individuals who take drugs, understand their inner world, lead them to discover or rediscover their own dignity and help them as active participants to bring about the re-emergence and growth of the personal resources that drugs have buried. This should be done by way of a confident reanimation of the will towards noble, stable ideals. The fear of the future and of commitments to adult life that is observed in young people today makes them particularly fragile. They have a tendency to withdraw into themselves. The forces of death push them to give in to drugs and violence, and sometimes even to suicide. Behind what might appear to be a fascination with destruction we find a call for help from these young people and a deep thirst for life that needs to be understood so that the world will know how to radically modify points of view and ways of like.

Young people who have overcome drugs represent hope and bear witness to the fact that victory is possible. To a society concerned about the drug phenomenon, they

constitute a new impetus for continuing the battle and committing all our energies and goodwill. Many types of action are needed to combat drug abuse effectively, but there is one central action without which nothing can be achieved: to restore fully the conviction of the transcendent, unique value of man and his responsibility for free self-fulfilment.

The President: I thank the President of the Pontifical Council for Pastoral Assistance to Health Care Workers of the Holy See for his statement.

I now give the floor to Mr. Manuel Marín, Vice-President of the European Commission.

Mr. Marín (European Commission) (*interpretation from Spanish*): These 15 months of intensive and fruitful work have demonstrated the international community's interest in and concern about the very complex issue of the fight against drugs.

If one concept could summarize the spirit of this special session, it would be that of shared responsibility. The seriousness and international dimensions of the fight against drugs make everyone's cooperation necessary. There are no easy solutions, nor is there room for unilateral measures: the problems are shared and their solution must be as well.

The attitude of the international community and public opinion with regard to the fight against drugs has come a long way. Today, the simplistic and artificial distinction between consuming and producing countries has lost all credibility. Moreover, all countries are affected by the same problems directly associated with drug-trafficking, such as money-laundering and the diversion of chemical precursors. Because the challenge is global, an essential component of this shared responsibility is the focus on multilateral approaches, of which this special session is a telling example.

In addition, the fact that the problems of drug production and consumption can be solved only by reducing economic and social marginalization is a fundamental element that must not be forgotten and that must guide international action. It must therefore be addressed as one of the social and economic dimensions of sustainable development. Likewise, we will not be able to put a stop to the cultivation of narcotic drugs without helping to ensure viable livelihoods for rural communities in developing countries, which often lack other economic alternatives.

Allow me to say a few words now about the European Community's strategy. We are fighting against three scourges. We are fighting against poverty and the hopelessness that it engenders, which gives rise to drug consumption and trafficking; we are fighting against drugs, which destroy homes and communities; and we are fighting against crime, which finds in drug-trafficking a vast and fertile terrain. We seek to strike a reasonable balance between the control of supply and the reduction of demand. We are fighting against social and health problems associated with drugs and the criminality they generate.

This strategy is embodied in a number of initiatives and approaches. First, the European Community is putting its own house in order, through policies for growth and job creation, through its fight against social exclusion, through the prevention of drug addiction and through its global action plan against drugs, which allows us to react quickly to new trends in drug production and consumption. This is important with regard to synthetic drugs, for which we have set up an early warning system that allows us to respond effectively to rapid changes in the design and use of these drugs. In this effort we are relying on the valuable expertise of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction. The European Union is ready to share its experience in this regard.

Secondly, in its actions abroad the European Community is a staunch supporter of both regional and multilateral approaches. In this regard, we support the agencies of the United Nations, particularly the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, as a centre of expertise.

Thirdly, we are helping strengthen our fight against the scourge of drugs through our political dialogue and other external policies with third countries. This political dialogue is particularly important in connection with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which are both producing and transit countries and also have a serious problem with synthetic drugs. The European Community's agreements with these countries were the first to include a drug clause. We are making considerable efforts to help them harmonize their laws and policies with ours and consolidate their civil societies, with a view to their future accession to the European Union.

Another result of political dialogue are the agreements to prevent the diversion of chemical

precursors that we have signed with the United States and other countries.

One fruit of our dialogue with Central America and Andean countries has been the establishment of a special drug regime within our Generalized System of Preferences. In this manner, we have encouraged and are encouraging the diversification of their economies away from drug cultivation. In addition, we support alternative development efforts, such as the successful Chapare project in Bolivia.

I also wish to emphasize the growing attention given to drugs in our dialogue with Asian and African countries and with the Caribbean. The Action Plan for the latter region will strengthen maritime cooperation and the fight against money laundering, which is essential to reduce drug trafficking.

Let us not forget that, however, as important as international cooperation is, the individual efforts of every nation to mainstream drug concerns into its social and economic policies are equally crucial.

Let me conclude by highlighting the strong support of the European Community for the Political Declaration and all its accompanying documents. In particular, we subscribe to all commitments relating to matters of Community competence.

The President: I thank the Vice-President of the European Commission for his statement.

I now give the floor to Mr. Raymond E. Kendall, Secretary-General of the International Criminal Police Organization.

Mr. Kendall (International Criminal Police Organization): Ten years have elapsed since we met in Vienna to finalize and adopt the 1988 United Nations Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. It was a major step forward in international diplomacy and focused the attention of the entire world community on the global plague of drug trafficking and abuse. Now, 10 years later, it is only fitting that we use this special session to take stock of what we have accomplished since then, individually and collectively, in controlling this scourge.

The organization which I represent is an international intergovernmental body, the main objective of which is to ensure and promote the widest possible mutual assistance between all criminal police authorities within the limits of the laws existing in the different countries and in the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This year, the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) is marking its seventy-fifth year of providing such assistance to its member countries.

The organization has assisted its member countries, from its inception, in combating all aspects of international crime, but it is in the fight against drug trafficking that this organization has played a leading role and invested the greater part of its resources. Our first resolution against drug trafficking was adopted in Berlin in 1926 and advocated central drug services to exchange information. It is interesting to see how much progress has been made since then.

Realizing that a modern communications system is essential to effective international cooperation, we have spent during the last 10 years over $20 million to ensure that our 177 member countries have the services at their disposal necessary to conduct investigations outside their normal jurisdiction and across borders. This system allows for the transmission of textual messages and also enables law enforcement services to instantly transmit photographs and fingerprints essential in identifying suspects and criminals operating internationally.

We are perhaps the only international organization which has the capability of transmitting criminal information to the law enforcement agencies of 177 countries in a rapid and secure way. Last year, about two million criminal messages were exchanged through the network, about 50 per cent of which were related to drug offences. As a result of the criminal information exchange, thousands of traffickers have been arrested and tons of illicit drugs have been seized.

In addition to communications, another requirement for successful transnational organized crime investigations is intelligence. Only when criminal intelligence is assembled in one place or one database and then systematically analyzed can the relationships, hierarchy and membership of organized criminal groups be identified and eventually immobilized. In a special operation conducted by us over the past two years, a major trafficking organization operating in virtually every region of the world was unmasked and many of its members were arrested. The organization specialized in smuggling drugs through the international postal service. The method facilitated the smuggling of hundreds of kilograms of cocaine and heroin across the globe. Through a systematic analysis of thousands of drug

records, we were able to identify several key members of the trafficking organization, who were subsequently arrested.

In our efforts to provide an appropriate response to the drug problem, we have always attached great importance to the need for close cooperation with other international and regional organizations concerned by the same problem.

A special working relationship with the United Nations Economic and Social Council Commission on Narcotic Drugs was established in 1948. Since then, we have attended all its meetings as observers. This special long-standing relationship was formally recognized in October 1996, when we were granted observer status to this Assembly. In accordance with both the spirit and the letter of various resolutions, there has been an unprecedented increase in the level of cooperation between Interpol and the Economic and Social Council, together with other United Nations bodies. We have also developed cooperation with other international and regional bodies.

I would like to say that, although law enforcement is the *raison d'être* of Interpol, we do not consider it as a panacea for all ills associated with the drug problem. The problem is too complex and needs to be addressed in social, medical and educational terms, as well as in terms of law enforcement, which means that, for us, the subject of demand reduction is particularly important.

We are adamantly opposed to any form of legalization of drugs, which would confer the status of legitimacy to illicit drugs or their abuse. On the other hand, we are entirely supportive of the notion of providing, as an alternative to punishment, the treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration of drug-abusing offenders, as is recommended in the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction in the papers which were prepared for this meeting. Such a multifaceted approach is likely to wean the drug users away from crime, disease and misery, ensure better deployment of scarce resources, and give us, the law enforcement authorities, a reasonable chance to deal with the drug barons and their illicit activities by concentrating on the distribution networks, down to street level.

Many speakers have referred to commitment and political will over the past three days. Whilst I am greatly encouraged by such statements, we in law enforcement have noted that there is often a considerable delay in translating words into effective policies and action programmes. There are many examples which I would quote, such as the recommendations arising from the Lyons meeting of the G7 group of nations concerning transnational crime. Many have yet to be implemented. How many countries have signed and ratified the 1988 Convention and still not created the appropriate domestic legislation? The Convention was adopted 10 years ago — how long does it take? There are police forces and customs units which are ill-equipped and ill-trained and receive little or no pay. This is not a mark of efficiency — it is an open invitation to corrupt practices.

As the main voice of law enforcement in this General Assembly, I would call upon the representatives of the nations of the world gathered here today to act in the principle of the Action Plan that is being proposed, with date limits to ensure that the action takes place in appropriate conditions and in the appropriate time. I believe that the time for a truly action-oriented approach has arrived and gives us the opportunity to begin again, perhaps with some new motivation.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General of the International Criminal Police Organization for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mokhtar Lamani, Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Mr. Lamani (Organization of the Islamic Conference) (*interpretation from French*): It is an honour and a pleasure for me to address this Assembly on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). Allow me at the outset to convey the greetings and best wishes for success of Mr. Azeddine Laraki, Secretary-General of the OIC, as well as his regret at being unable to attend this important session of the General Assembly.

We must first welcome the unity and solidarity shown by the Members of the United Nations in confronting the scourge of drugs. The massive presence of member countries of the OIC and, especially, their level of representation bear witness to the importance that our Organization attaches to this problem and its harmful effects upon socio-economic progress, family structures, and all the dimensions of our modern society.

The OIC has always placed this important question amongst its key concerns, as can be seen in the various resolutions adopted by the organization at the summit and ministerial conference levels. Thus, in 1988, the OIC organized a meeting of experts in Istanbul to address the

use, production, illegal processing and sale of psychotropic substances. The group of experts proposed measures aimed at countering this scourge. Those measures are essentially inspired by the provisions of the three international Conventions on drugs: the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 and the United Nations Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988.

The development of modern techniques and the globalization of the world economy have set a new challenge in the struggle against this growing scourge because it is no longer possible for any single country to control this phenomenon. It can be effectively fought only by strengthening cooperation and the shared utilization of technological and human resources that only the United Nations and regional organizations can bring together.

That is why our organization favours a global approach to this question, an integrated international approach that takes into account all aspects, including the socio-economic, of the question.

The documents submitted to this session deserve our keen attention. The shortfalls in the financing of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme must be corrected. However, we welcome the work done by the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention under the leadership of its Executive Director, Mr. Pino Arlacchi. We support strengthening law enforcement legislation against money laundering, as well as the proposal of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs that certain international financial institutions should take bolder steps to incorporate the drug dimension into their development programmes.

The countries that constitute the largest markets for narcotics need to strengthen their presence in United Nations machinery and in their assistance to and cooperation with the South. Assistance in this area should target not only law enforcement machinery — the judiciary, customs and police — but also the banking sector, in order to curb money laundering linked to drug trafficking.

The machinery of the United Nations and of regional and national groups are the appropriate frameworks for facing this issue. Our organization will spare no effort to participate actively in all forms of information exchange and multilateral arrangements aimed at developing technical assistance programmes to respond to the complexity of this phenomenon and to fight this scourge.

The abuse of and illegal traffic in drugs have devastating effects on our States and societies. They encourage the rise of crime, violence and corruption. They severely drain human, natural and financial resources that could otherwise be used for economic and social development.

One new aspect of this trend is that it has spread to countries that lack the means to combat it and are thus the ideal targets of the drug multinational. The weakness of State machinery, civil wars and the disorganization of traditional structures are elements that make international drug crimes difficult to combat. The sales figures of this traffic are sometimes literally mind-boggling in comparison with the budgets of many developing countries.

That is why we welcome the options discussed by the international forums and regional arrangements aimed at attacking the phenomenon at various stages. The programmes should cover prevention as well as consumption. They should seek to promote judicial cooperation, to strengthen the fight against money laundering and to develop viable alternatives in order to eliminate the planting of drug crops by promoting replacement crops.

On the eve of the twenty-first century, we are entitled to believe in the firm resolve of the international community to give shape to the common will to eradicate this scourge forever.

The President: I thank the Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Bin Mohamed Al-Salem, Secretary-General, Arab Interior Ministers' Council, League of Arab States.

Mr. Al-Salem (League of Arab States) (*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset, I am pleased to extend my sincere thanks to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his kind invitation to the Arab Interior Ministers' Council to attend this special session of the General Assembly devoted to countering the drug problem, which harms the souls and bodies of millions of people, tears at the fabric of societies and countless families and brings many tragedies and lots of pain to humanity as a whole.

I am also pleased to convey the greetings of His Royal Highness, Prince Nayif ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, the Interior Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Honorary President of the Arab Interior Ministers' Council. His colleagues, Their Royal Highnesses and Excellencies, the Arab Interior Ministers, assure this Assembly of their absolute and sincere support for any international effort to curb and stem this phenomenon and limit its negative human and material impacts on mankind.

The Arab Interior Ministers' Council, established in 1982, is a regional security body in which all Arab countries are members. Its main objective is to develop cooperative and coordination efforts among its member States in the fields of internal security and crime control. In this context, the Council seeks to promote the security and safety of the individual in the Arab homeland, protecting his rights and properties regardless of his nationality, religious beliefs or ethnic background.

In order to achieve this noble goal, the Arab Interior Ministers' Council has designed many strategies, plans and programmes in the brief period since its inception. A close look at the agenda of this session will show that our Council has already addressed many questions included on it through the implementation of the items and components of the Arab Strategy against the illicit use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, adopted by the Council in 1986.

The Strategy is aimed at tackling the drug problem in its various dimensions and trends and at the local, regional and international levels.

At the national level, each Arab country has established a specialized drug-control unit, while many have high-level national committees for the same purpose. The member States seek to enhance the efficiency and performance of the staff working in drug-control units, who benefit from training courses and scientific seminars and symposiums held in this field, which are organized by the Naif Arab Academy for Security Studies, the scientific organ of the Arab Interior Ministers' Council. In some Arab countries, private volunteer associations have been established to promote awareness of the harmful effects of drugs. Specialized treatment clinics and rehabilitation and social integration centres, have been set up.

Arab members of our Council and the Arab Security Information Office affiliated with our secretariat wage anti-drug media campaigns in order to prevent our children from falling victim to drugs. We consider the addict to be a patient in need of treatment, rehabilitation and corrective measures.

Local measures against drugs cannot bear fruit unless they are accompanied by policies and action at the regional and international levels. We in the Arab countries are well aware of this. In the context of promoting regional Arab cooperation, many countries have reviewed and developed their national legislation and drug laws in the light of new international developments, guided by the unified model Arab drug law previously adopted by our Council.

On the other hand, the Arab Convention against the illicit use and traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, adopted by the Council in 1994, is an effective legal coordination tool among our Arab countries in combating this phenomenon. To promote procedural and technical cooperation among the member States, the heads of the national drug-law enforcement agencies in the Arab homeland meet annually under the umbrella of our secretariat. Our twelfth conference was held a few days ago in Tunisia. Our specialized office for drug affairs also periodically reviews the unified Arab blacklist of traffickers in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. It also defines and modifies the unified Arab schedule of drug substances, under international control, and prepares the quarterly and annual statistical reports on the volume and dimensions of the drug phenomenon in the Arab world.

As for Arab international cooperation, the Council encourages and calls upon Arab States to promote cooperation and coordination with other countries in order to combat this phenomenon collectively and effectively. The outcome of this cooperation has been 15 bilateral and multilateral agreements among the Arab countries and between them and others, as well as the accession of 17 Arab countries to the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 and the ratification by 13 Arab States of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988.

While we seek today to enhance regional and international cooperation to counter a phenomenon that is deeply rooted in societies and hits hard at individuals and groups at every level, from this rostrum we assure the whole world that we, as Arabs and Muslims, are in the vanguard of nations that stand firmly and decisively against crime in all its forms. Our Islamic principles and moral values are the main impulse behind our struggle

and call for virtue, goodness and the rejection of corruption and evil behaviour.

We have come here today to contribute to shielding humanity from dangers and scourges of every kind. We have come to support all actions and measures to reduce the illicit supply of and demand for narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and oppose any effort to legalize any kind of drug, regardless of the justification. We have come to enhance and increase cooperation with the specialized agencies of the United Nations and to pursue the follow-up implementation of the General Assembly's resolutions with regard to providing financial and technical support for some Arab States in order to assist them to combat the production, traffic and consumption of drugs. The Arab world belongs to the larger world, which benefits from our efforts as much as we benefit from its efforts in the struggle against a problem that plagues us all. We are all working together to eradicate the illicit cultivation; limit the illicit deviation of precursors; implement controlled delivery operations; target, pursue and apprehend members of distribution and trafficking gangs and cartels; and undertake other constructive and fruitful measures of cooperation.

We wish this session every success and reaffirm our commitment to working together for a drug-free world.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General, Arab Interior Ministers' Council of the League of Arab States, for his statement.

I now give the floor to Mr. Christopher Bakwesegha, Chairman of the delegation of the Organization of African Unity.

Mr. Bakwesegha (Organization of African Unity): Allow me first of all to reiterate the condolences recently expressed by Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, on the sudden death of General Sani Abacha of Nigeria. May his soul rest in peace.

In their interventions before this special session of the General Assembly on drugs, participants have illustrated that the drug problem is tearing at societies and that no nation, however powerful, can feel secure in the presence of this menace. They have argued that the drug problem threatens human values, engenders crime, spreads AIDS and undermines our social and economic development endeavours. Above all, participants have pointed out that drugs kill. Therefore, the drug problem is not something that we can walk away from. Indeed, history will judge us harshly if we simply wash our hands and say we have nothing to do with it.

On behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), therefore, I would like to thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations for convening the present session to enable nations near and far to exchange views, share their experiences, plan together and work out strategies which could help improve the international community's response to the problem of drugs. We concur that, in order to remain effective in our enduring struggle against the drug menace, we must pull together and we must strengthen our existing drug mechanisms and dovetail them into international drug control strategies. Indeed, cooperation and partnership offer the best prospects for the eradication of the drug menace, due regard being given to the new and imaginative partnerships of cooperation at the subregional level as well as at the level of civil society.

Deeply concerned with the drug problem, the African heads of State and Government adopted a Plan of Action on drug abuse and illicit trafficking control in Africa in 1996. The Plan of Action addresses, *inter alia*, the issues of reducing the illicit demand for drugs, the suppression of illicit drug trafficking, international cooperation, bilateral and multilateral cooperation agreements, as well as community mobilization. It also highlights the role of the regional economic communities and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in monitoring international drug treaties. It further provides a framework for a coordinated, comprehensive and concerted international approach to combat drug abuse and illicit trafficking in Africa and helps increase the commitment of Governments to identify priority actions for drug eradication and related problems.

For the purposes of implementing the Plan — and realizing the need for international cooperation for combating illicit drug-trafficking — Member States have now entered into bilateral and multilateral cooperation agreements and are forging technical cooperation to mobilize action for controlling drug abuse and illicit trafficking at national, subregional and regional levels. Along with this, efforts have been deployed to develop human resources to successfully deal with drug cases and for Africa to effectively use its existing institutions to train drug-law-enforcement officers.

Allow me now to draw the attention of this body to the African common position, which was formulated

during the African group of experts meeting, and which was adopted by the African Ministers of labour and social affairs and endorsed by the OAU Council of Ministers at the recently concluded thirty-fourth Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

This African position underscores the multifaceted drug problems of the continent and makes recommendations that should be implemented within the African context. This Assembly is therefore urged to consider those issues that are peculiar to Africa or that affect Africa more than the other continents. As African States establish national drug-control administrations for coordinating, monitoring and controlling drug activities, the international community and, in particular, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme are called upon to assist those administrations in devising drug-control programmes and in providing technical assistance for their implementation.

For its part, the OAU will continue with its activities relating to the monitoring of the implementation of the African Plan of Action, as well as of the common position, and deploy efforts to promote accession to the international treaties. In this regard, it should be noted that out of the 53 member States of the OAU, 43 are parties to the 1961 Convention, 41 are parties to the 1971 Convention and 37 are parties to the 1988 Convention. Efforts are also being deployed to ensure that those States that have not yet done so do accede to the conventions.

In conclusion, it is now my pleasant duty to inform the Assembly that OAU Secretary-General, Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim has agreed to be a member of the Committee of Wise Men established by the United Nations Secretary-General in his endeavour to eliminate the scourge of drugs.

As the United Nations Secretary-General once said, the fight against drugs requires vision and perseverance. I wish to pledge that the OAU will spare no effort in working with vision and perseverance and in tandem with the international community in our common endeavour to free the world of the drug menace.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of the Organization of African Unity for his statement.

We have heard the last speaker in the general debate, and thus we have concluded our consideration of agenda item 8.

Agenda items 9, 10, 11 and 12

Review of international drug control instruments

(a) Adherence to and implementation of international drug control treaties

(b) Review of General Assembly resolution S-17/2 of 23 February 1990, adopted by the Assembly at its seventeenth special session, in particular progress made in implementing the Global Programme of Action annexed thereto

Measures to promote implementation of the international drug control treaties and to strengthen international cooperation in the fight against the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and related activities, including corruption; and proposals for new strategies, methods and practical activities in addressing the problem of drug abuse and illicit trafficking, with due regard to the gender perspective, in particular

(a) Judicial cooperation and strengthening of national legislation

(b) Prevention of the diversion of chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, and measures to strengthen control of the manufacture of and trafficking in stimulants and their precursors

(c) Reduction of the illicit demand for drugs, including the draft declaration on the guiding principles of demand reduction and its implementation

(d) Prevention, sanctioning and action against money-laundering

(e) International cooperation in illicit crop eradication and alternative development

(f) Coordination within the United Nations system in the fight against drug-trafficking and related organized crime, against terrorist groups engaged in drug-trafficking and against illicit arms trade

(g) Promoting regional cooperation

Review of the international drug control regime: strengthening United Nations machinery for drug control

Report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twentieth Special Session (A/S-20/11)

Adoption of the final documents of the twentieth special session and follow-up measures for their implementation

The President: I now request Mr. N. K. Singh of India, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twentieth Special Session, to introduce the report of the Committee.

Mr. Singh (India), Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole: I have the honour to present to the General Assembly today the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twentieth Special Session of the General Assembly, which is contained in document A/S-20/11.

The Ad Hoc Committee held two meetings, on 8 and 9 June, to consider the three agenda items allocated to it by the General Assembly, namely, items 9, 10 and 11. In paragraph 23 of its report, the Ad Hoc Committee recommends three draft resolutions to the General Assembly for adoption, and in paragraph 24, it recommends one draft decision.

I thus submit the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twentieth Special Session to the General Assembly for its consideration and adoption.

The President: I thank the Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twentieth Special Session for the introduction of the report.

If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the Assembly will not discuss the report.

It was so decided.

The President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote, but I hope that there will be no such statements.

The Assembly will now proceed to take a decision on the three draft resolutions recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twentieth Special Session in paragraph 23 of its report (A/S-20/11), and the draft decision recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole in paragraph 24 of the same report. I hope that Members are in possession of the report of the Committee.

We turn first to the three draft resolutions.

Draft resolution I is entitled "Political Declaration". The text of draft resolution I is contained for the time being in document A/S-20/4, chapter V, section A.

Draft resolution I was recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twentieth Special Session for adoption.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution I?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution S-20/2).

The President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction". The text of draft resolution II is contained for the time being in document A/S-20/4, chapter V, section A.

Draft resolution II was recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twentieth Special Session for adoption.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution II?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution S-20/3).

The President: Draft resolution III is entitled "Measures to enhance international cooperation to counter the world drug problem". The text of draft resolution III is contained for the time being in document A/S/20/4, chapter V, section A.

Draft resolution III was recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twentieth Special Session for adoption.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution III?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution S-20/4).

The President: We next turn to the draft decision recommended for adoption by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole in paragraph 24 of its report. The draft decision is entitled "Documentation considered by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole".

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: We have thus concluded our consideration of agenda items 9, 10, 11 and 12.

Statement by the representative of the Secretary-General

I now give the floor to Under-Secretary-General Pino Arlacchi, as the representative of the Secretary-General.

Mr. Arlacchi (Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme): It is my great honour to address this concluding meeting of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly on behalf of Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

The end of this session marks the start of a new chapter in global drug control. We have sent the world a message of hope this week. The decades of nations pointing fingers at each other are finished.

We are not starting a new "war on drugs"; in fact, there never was one. The better analogy for the international community is that of a doctor facing a deadly disease. Drugs, quite simply, kill people, and it is our responsibility to help find the cure.

With the adoption of the Political Declaration and the action plans, we have taken further steps towards a drug-free world. Member States should be proud of what they have accomplished in New York during these three days. But the real work begins tomorrow. The international community must take this spirit of accomplishment and meet the deadlines of 2003 and 2008 to eliminate or significantly reduce the consumption and production of all illegal drugs. And we must foil the money launderer and the drug trafficker at every turn.

Some have said that the special session was diplomatic business as usual. It is imperative that we prove otherwise. Our work cannot simply be left on a piece of paper in this Hall. We cannot pat ourselves on the back and move on to other issues. There is always room for improvement. There is always more that can be done. This means continuing to listen carefully to those who provide constructive criticism on how we can create a drug-free world. No one has a monopoly on the truth.

The responsibility to keep moving forward now depends on Member States' commitment to take full ownership of these plans and their desire to achieve concrete results. Pledges must turn into implementation, actions and results. The eyes of the world are upon us. This is not the time to sit on the sidelines. We intend to fully succeed -- and we will certainly never give up.

We must heed the examples set by other important United Nations conferences — on the environment, women's issues, population and social development -- and move forward with a sense of purpose and action. The drug-control issue has now been similarly raised to the top of the global agenda. This means building on the political momentum while constantly remembering the framework of international cooperation and respect for sovereignty, as embodied in the Charter of the United Nations.

The concepts of tolerance and solidarity for human rights are precious, and we must remain vigilant in their defence. We will treasure this in every moment of our work. However, we should not forget that the notion that drug use is a kind of human right is inherently immoral, as it suggests that human lives are not worth saving from the devastation of addiction.

At the international level, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme will continue to be there every step of the way, assisting Governments and non-governmental actors in meeting goals and working towards a more civil society.

Let us all go forward with the resolve that the commitment we have made to work for a drug-free world will be met with actions and the resources needed to ensure real and measurable results. Together we can meet this challenge. Now, let's get to work.

The President: I thank Under-Secretary-General Pino Arlacchi for his statement.

Statement by the President

The President: We are about to conclude the twentieth special session of the General Assembly. When

it opened the day before yesterday, by one of its first actions the Assembly approved the official title of the special session as "Twentieth special session of the General Assembly devoted to countering the world drug problem together". Stylistically, this represents a welcome departure from some of the longer and more formal-sounding United Nations names. Substantively, however, this title, I think, expresses the key motif that characterized this session: the United Nations membership's togetherness in confronting a common menace.

Significantly, this spirit of togetherness was established from the very beginning and, as a direct result, the preparatory process yielded crucial agreement on all the underlying political issues, despite the occasional divergence of views and the sensitivity of some of the problems.

We have witnessed an involved and pragmatic discussion of future action, follow-up and implementation. The three days of intensive and businesslike work have also demonstrated the unswerving commitment of Member States to the task of eradicating the peril of narcotic drugs from the face of the earth.

The strong showing of world political leaders is bound to give an impetus to international drug control efforts. At the same time, the presence at the session of senior Government officials directly involved in the fight against drugs has benefited greatly the work of the session. A total of 158 speakers took part in the general debate, including 23 heads of State, eight Prime Ministers, one Vice-President and seven observers. Meanwhile, joining the discussions in the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole were several United Nations agencies and programmes, as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations designated by their constituencies.

The past three days have given us a rich and thought-provoking picture of the state of national efforts in different parts of the world to tackle the drug problem, as the speakers described their programmes, offered perceptive analyses and made sound suggestions.

Many delegations not only spoke about their own experiences dealing with the drug menace but also offered to share them with others in combating this dangerous phenomenon. At the same time, while acknowledging the primary responsibility of national Governments, they have stressed the importance of enhancing concerted international actions in this sphere — first of all, under the auspices of relevant United Nations agencies. In this context, many speakers underscored the need for a more coordinated approach among various United Nations bodies to address the drug problems effectively. They gave full backing to the strategy pursued by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, which is based on a balanced and multidisciplinary approach, with an increased focus on demand reduction.

The globalization of today's world has been mentioned numerous times in this Hall. But the fact that the term may have already become a cliché should not in anyway diminish the true significance of the concept itself. If anything, the success of the twentieth special session reflects the growing realization throughout our planet that we are all in the same boat. This has compelled a fundamental rethinking and a growing convergence of views on measures to combat drug abuse and illicit drug-trafficking.

The Political Declaration and other documents we have just adopted represent a new departure for a comprehensive, global strategy to tackle simultaneously all aspects of the drug problem. By putting forward a bold objective — a drastic reduction of both supply and demand for drugs by the year 2008 — the Political Declaration signifies a global consensus on the shared responsibility of all countries for the successful outcome of the fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking. It spells out the obligations for all groups of countries, setting clear target dates to take action in agreed-upon areas.

So, as the result of this special session, we have before us a well-designed strategy and a package of measures and goals to be achieved within precise time-frames. We have three agenda-setting political documents that enjoy unanimous support. What is needed, then, for this session to go down in history as a truly watershed event is to make sure that all of these plans are translated into practical deeds. By working together we can launch a new period in countering the drug problem and send a strong positive message that the United Nations is capable of successfully tackling one of the most dangerous threats in today's world.

Before closing, let me once again extend my sincere thanks to all delegations for their cooperation during the past three days. I would like to express special gratitude to the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole and to the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly, whose constant support made my task much easier. I think it is also very symbolic that addressing the General Assembly

this evening on behalf of the Secretary-General was Mr. Pino Arlacchi, the Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, who has made a valuable contribution to the success of this session. Finally, I would also like to pay tribute to the United Nations Secretariat and the General Assembly division, as well as to the interpreters, translators and all Conference Services staff and other staff who often remain unseen, but without whom the smooth functioning of the session would have been impossible. I thank you all.

Agenda item 2

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

The President: We have come to the end of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly.

May I invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

Closure of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly

The President: I declare closed the twentieth special session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 9.55 p.m.